

Concept of Sarasvatī

(In Vedic Literature)

Dr. Raghunath Airi

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FOREWARD

Sarasvatī is one of the very few Vedic deities, who has come down from hoary antiquity to modern times, fully retaining her universal appeal to all and worshipped by the intellectual, Hindu, Jain and Buddhist, though under different names. While some of the mighty deities of the Vedic pantheon receded to the back-ground, were reduced to insignificant status or gradually disappeared altogether from the Hindu pantheon giving place to new ones, the Goddess Sarasvatī of the R̥gveda has gradually risen to prominence and has become, in due course, the full-fledged goddess of learning and wisdom of the whole of Bhārata-Varṣa. In the R̥gveda Sarasvatī unfolds her two fold nature as river and as deity and has been distinctly and clearly described, though briefly. With the disappearance of the mighty river Sarasvatī, graphically described in the RV and termed as *nadītamā*, 'the mightiest among the rivers', and as *sindhumatā*, 'the mother of all rivers' in the deserts of north-western India, she as a river has almost lost her Vedic identity and has become a river of Vedic myth. The river Sarasvatī was indeed an Indo-Iranian river with her analogue Anāhitā, found described in the Zend Avesta. But Sarasvatī as the deity of wisdom and eloquence came down through the ages, inspiring the people of intellectual pursuits (*cetanī sumatīnām*, RV 1, 3, 11) and directing her devotees to the path of light and wisdom by unfolding the inexhaustible treasure of knowledge (*pracetayati ketunā*, RV 1, 3, 12).

In the present book which formed the doctoral dissertation accepted by the Kurukshetra University, Dr. Raghunath Airi has exhaustively dealt with the concept of Sarasvatī in ancient Indian literature, comprising the Vedas, the epics and the Purāṇas. Such aspects of goddess Sarasvatī, as her gradual evolution and development, and her relation with other deities, as also the anthropomorphism and iconography relating to her have received full treatment in this thesis.

Dr. Airi has, however, left out, for obvious reason, the knotty problem, often discussed by the Vedists and historians, regarding the identification of the Vedic Sarasvatī and has confined himself to the divine aspect of Sarasvatī. However it is evident beyond a shadow of doubt that the R̥gvedic Sarasvatī coming down from the height of the Himalayas and flowing through the plain of North-Western India did reach, in her course, the Arabian sea. Therefore it is likely that the mighty river Sarasvatī of the RV might have changed her course from west to east after a series of catastrophic earth-quakes that devastated this sensitive region of Himalayan range. This must have happened in post R̥gvedic period. What is known as the river Brahmaputra today might be no other than the Vedic Sarasvatī but with changed course from the west to the east.

It may be noted in this connection that the river Brahmaputra was known as the Brahmasuta in the Purāṇas, which is a synonym for Sarasvatī.

ABBREVIATIONS

I—The Vedic Saṁhitās

AV.	=	Atharvaveda Saṁhitā
Kap. S.	=	Kapishthalakāṭha Saṁhitā
Kāṭha S.	=	Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā
Mait. S.	=	Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā
RV.	=	R̥gveda Saṁhitā
Taitt. S.	=	Taittirīya Saṁhitā
Y V.	=	Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā

II—The Brāhmaṇas And the Āraṇyakas

Ait. Br.	=	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
Go. Br.	=	Gopatha Brāhmaṇa
Jai. Br.	=	Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa
Kau. Br.	=	Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa
Śān. Br.	=	Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa
Ś. Br.	=	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
Tāṇḍya Br.	=	Tāṇḍya Mahā Brāhmaṇa
Taitt. Br.	=	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa
Ait. Ār.	=	Aitareya Āraṇyaka
Taitt. Ār Up.	=	Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad

III—The Kalpa Sūtras

Āp ŚS	=	Āpastamba Śrautasūtra
Kā ŚS	=	Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra
Lāṭ Ś S	=	Lāṭyāyana Śrautasūtra
Śān Ś S	=	Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra
Vai. ŚS	=	Vaikhāṇasa Śrautasūtra
Vaitāna S	=	Vaitāna sūtra
Āgni G S	=	Āgniveśya Gṛhyasūtra
Drā GS	=	Drāhyāyana Gṛhyasūtra
Go GS	=	Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra
Hi GS	=	Hiranyakeśī Gṛhyasūtra
Śān GS	=	Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra
Vā GS	=	Vāraha Gṛhyasūtra
Āp DS	=	Āpastambīya Dharmasūtra
Baudha DS	=	Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra
Vi Dha.	=	Viṣṇu Dharmasūtra
SR Up.	=	Sarasvatī Rahasyopaniṣad

Containing, as it does, substantial material on Sarasvatī culled from diverse sources and presented methodically, it is to be hoped that Indologists will warmly welcome this work as constituting a distinct contribution to universal knowledge.

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INTRODUCTION

Devatā is conceived as a manifestation of the Ultimate Reality by an Indian seer. In the presence of the idea of Para Brahman or Para Sakti, therefore, the significance of a *devatā* does not diminish. The concept of an Indian *devatā* has no correspondence in other religions of the world, inasmuch as a *devatā* can be conceived as identical to the Supreme Being in Indian religion while no angel, 'fārista' or 'yazd' can be termed as god, Allah or Ormuzd. Thus the person of an Indian *devatā* cannot be separated from the idea of Absolute Brahman. Sarasvatī amongst numerous deities of Indian Pantheon occupies a prominent place. She is conceived at present the divine knowledge, a goddess presiding over all branches of learning and those of trade. Her concept as such is the result of a phased development, effected by and by through ages.)

I have attempted here to present a complete and comprehensive picture of the concept of Sarasvatī in the Vedic, Epic and Puranic Literature; her representation in sculptures, coins etc. has also been traced in different ages and in different regions. There is a monotonous repetition of material and thought in various Purāṇas, therefore, documentary information has often been supplied from one of such texts in order to avoid the wearisome reproduction of ideas.

I have axed my findings on the river Sarasvatī especially wherever it is not spoken of as a divinity in the texts of the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas in order to delimit the scope of my project. During the course of my research, I have felt many a time that there is a further scope of research on this topic, as to find out the extent of the correspondence of the Aryan/Hindu concept of Sarasvatī in the Buddhist and Jain concepts of the Goddess of Learning. Sarasvatī and Mañjuśrī in the Buddhist Pantheon correspond to our Sarasvatī and Brahmā in many characteristics. And again the concept of Sruṭadevī and the Sixteen Vidyādevīs of the Jains is quite near to that of our Sarasvatī. This scope of research can be still widened when we view that the idea of the Goddess of Learning has also travelled overseas through both Hinduism and Buddhism. Carrying the local impact with her person, one can meet Hindu Sarasvatī in Bali¹ and Buddhist Sarasvatī in Japan².

[iii]

All important statements in the work have been fully documented and all conclusions are based on a study of original sources. In the interpretation of certain passages I sometimes differ from the commentators and translators and the reasons for the same have been added in foot notes. References from original texts have often been quoted which resulted in inflating the volume to some extent, but there was hardly any escape from it. A possible vigilance has been kept to avoid repetition but at places where a particular point is viewed afresh from a different angle, its repetition was felt imperative. I express my hearty thanks and gratitude to those generous scholars who very kindly gave their valuable time, esteemed guidance and valuable suggestions to improve the work. I do not deem it fit to free myself from the debt by just mentioning their names and saying a few formal words of thanks in their honour because I owe them much and mere words here will not absolve me of the debt.

I also crave the indulgence of those celebrated scholars whose views, during my search after truth, have been refuted. But this difference of opinion has never lessened my respect for them or their works. To err is human and we are all liable to do so under one illusion or another.

I take this opportunity to thank Shri P. R. Kaikini, Bombay, Pandit Paras Ram Sharma and Shri Jagdish Chander Sharma of Lok Chetna Printing Press, Rohtak who gave unstinted co-operation to me in bringing out this book.

Calitra Sukla 6, 2034 V. S.

Raghunath Aivī

JHAJJAR (Rohtak)

1. Samaveda text has been left out as it sheds no fresh light on the Rgyedic concept of the goddess. Information of the Kausika Sūtra, and Vaitāna Sūtra has been applied to explain the Atharvavedic mantras.
2. See Alice Getty, Gods of Northern Buddhism, Tokyo, 1962.
3. See J. A. H. R. S. Part 3-4, Vol. XXVIII, 1962-63, 'Sruṭadevī' by Dr. V. Yasodadevī.
4. See Sylvain Lévi, Sanskrit Texts in Bali, *passim*.
5. See Alice Getty, op. cit. p. 127 ff.

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Vedic Section

CHAPTER 1

SARASVATĪ IN THE RĠVEDA

Sarasvati has been praised and prayed to in the RV in about eighty *ṛcs*. She has often been referred to in the prayers to Viśvedevāḥ but she is also a *sūkta-bhāk* deity to whom at least three *sūktas* are dedicated, to wit, 6,61;7,95;96; however, in one-third of the *mantras* of the last two *sūktas* her consort *Sarasvat* has been glorified. Sarasvati has been exalted by Vedic worshippers in the popular fashion and style with which all other Vedic gods are lauded. Thus in many qualities she is analogous to others but at the same time her individuality can be well-marked in Vedic prayers and *mantras* sung in her praise. She was conceived in her various aspects by the Vedic seers which we shall see below.

SARASVATĪ—A RIVER-GODDESS

Sarasvati is, primarily, a river-goddess, though this form of the goddess has not been recognised by scholiasts save Yāska¹. She is quite an ancient deity because she has an Iranian parallel in the sacred river Haraihvati. In the Avestic Aban Yasht (5,3), *aredvi*, *sūrā* and *anāhirā* are the three attributes of Haraihvati. In our terminology we can say that *ardhukī*, 'benign' or *ardrikā*, 'humid' *sūrā*, 'strong or heroic' and *anāsirā*, 'immaculate' are the attributes of Indo-Iranian Sarasvati, 'rich in waters.' Though the original Indo-Iranian attributes of Sarasvati, viz., *ardrikā* or *ardhukī* (*aredvi*), *sūrā* (*sūra*) and *anāsirā* (*anāhirā*) are conspicuous by their absence in the RV but their reflection or correspondence is happily preserved in *ṛtāvari*², *ṛtrapatnī*³ and *subhrā*⁴, respectively.

1. It is said that Yāska (Nir. 2, 23) has referred to two types of *mantras* relating to Sarasvati—(i) those which speak of Sarasvati as a river and (ii) those which speak of Sarasvati as a goddess. Reading this terse expression of Yāska one is likely to pose a question as to what form of the goddess Sarasvati has been referred to by Yāska. Does he mean by *devatā*, Sarasvati, a river goddess, or the goddess of Learning and Intellect or the goddess of

atmospheric region having water as its chief element or the goddess having a composite character with all characteristics of her various forms viz., river-goddess, goddess of Learning and Intellect and goddess of atmospheric region? It seems that by *devatā* Yaska means here the river goddess because the *mantras* quoted and explained by Yaska to illustrate the personality of the goddess suggest that Yaska has the concept of Sarasvatī as a river goddess before him. Out of the two *mantras* quoted by Yaska, the first (1, 3, 10) referring to Sarasvatī as *pāśakā* (one who purifies) does not speak of any distinct attribute of the goddess. It is, because, the act of purifying is a common characteristic of Vedic deities like Agni (1, 160, 3 and etc.) the Maruts (7, 56, 2) and the Dāvas (4, 51, 3); similarly, her epithet *Vajinsvatī* is primarily a synonym of Uśas (Nigh. 1, 8). The epithet *dhīvān* is also applied to Agni, Indra and Soma (discussed below). Hence it seems that this *mantra* has been quoted by Yaska in order to emphasise that Sarasvatī is as good as any Vedic deity since she, too, has such characteristics as are common to other Vedic gods. In the second *mantra* (1, 3, 12), of course, the distinct characteristics of Sarasvatī are referred to. Yaska explains that Sarasvatī makes her great flood manifest (*mahā arāṇi-mahad arāṇi prakṛtyatī*) by her action (*ketuṇa-karmāṇi*) and she reveals clearly (*abhi-vi-rjati vistarāṇa dīpṇatī*, Sayana) all (branches of) profound knowledge (*sarvāni prajñāni*)—Nir. 11, 27. According to Yaska, therefore, the goddess Sarasvatī along with her riverine character makes manifest the different branches of learning.

After it, Yaska says (11, 27): Sarasvatī denotes the sense of speech (*vāk*), she is, therefore, considered as *Mādhyaṃikā Vāk* by the etymologists. *Mantras* quoted by Yaska (RV 8, 100, 10, 11) refer to Vāk in the form of Thunder and Lightning. This observation of Yaska leads us to infer that Sarasvatī was considered by the etymologists to be a goddess of atmospheric region also and in this form she was identical to the goddess Vāk, representing the phenomena of thunder and lightning. Thus it is said generally, by the interpreters of Yaska that the latter too, like Nigamanu took Sarasvatī in two forms — as a river, and as a goddess of atmospheric region holding her sway on the branches of knowledge. However, if we read between the lines of the text of Yaska, we see that he, perhaps, himself conceived Sarasvatī as *nadī-devatā*, 'the river goddess', presiding over different branches of knowledge. By the words written after the explanation of this *mantra*, he says that etymologists take Sarasvatī (i. e., in addition to her *nadī-devatā* concept which is quite popular in the Veda and is alluded to by the *mantra*-1, 3, 12) as a *Mādhyaṃikā Vāk*. Since the sense of the word 'also' is understood in this sentence and not expressed by the *nīpātā* (indeclinable) 'ap', he is misunderstood by the later scholars. Again it may be said that the meaning of the words of Yaska which we understand is not against the spirit of his words *nadīdevatā ca nigama bhavanti*, in which he refers to two types of *mantras* because the second type of *mantras* pertaining to *devatā* will contain in it the *mantras* pertaining to the goddess Sarasvatī, may she be conceived as a *nadī-devatā* or a *Mādhyaṃikā Vāk*.

2. 6, 61 9. According to Yaska (2, 25) *ṛtā* means water *ṛtāvāt* would thus mean 'humid', 'full of water'.

3. 10, 65, 13. 4. 7, 95, 6.

Is Sarasvatī a Celestial River?

In her prayers and panegyrics, Sarasvatī, the river-goddess, is thought of as 'carved out as vast by (god) Vibhvan¹, 'having (celestial) 'ocean as her mother², 'coming down (on earth) from heaven³, 'pervading the three regions⁴, 'present in heaven and earth⁵, 'possessed of divinity of higher order amongst the other river-goddesses⁶, and 'for whom Vasīṣṭha has unbarred the two doors of *ṛtā*⁷. Because of the divinity attached to the person of the river-goddess, Dr. B. R. Sharma has propounded that Sarasvatī is more of a celestial character than terrestrial⁸ and asserts that Sarasvatī seem to be a 'celestial flood⁹ and not a terrestrial stream. At another place he says that Sarasvatī is but a mythical river.¹⁰

Though it cannot be improbable that Sarasvatī to begin with, would have been a mere 'celestial flood' for elder Ṛṣis and its reflection was seen afterwards in the mundane Sarasvatī by younger Ṛṣis. Later on, this terrestrial Sarasvatī would have been deified by the younger seers,¹¹ firstly, because it was thought of by them as a reflection of the 'celestial flood' and, secondly, for the beneficence and benignity of the river towards them who depended on its water. After her deification the goddess Sarasvatī an apotheosis of the river of that name, would have been regarded as possessed of divine qualities and thought of as exercising her influence in the celestial region also. But this does not mean that when a deity is said as exercising an influence on the celestial sphere, he ceases to be a terrestrial god. It is but natural in the process of glorification that he (the terrestrial god) should be thought of as 'pervading the three worlds' and as 'possessed of celestial links'. Thus the divine qualities of Sarasvatī where in she is regarded as possessed of a celestial character cannot lead us to think that Sarasvatī in the RV is but a 'celestial-flood', 'celestial goddess' or a 'mythical-river'.

Dr. B. R. Sharma¹² further adds 'her epithet *pañca-jatā var-dhayanī* does not prove her terrestrial character in any way'. Taking it for granted that the *pañca-jatā* or *pañca-jana* are the celestial beings, as Dr. Sharma thinks, we may add that such an epithet also would fit in quite well in the context of the glorification of Sarasvatī. The worshippers here may mean that river-goddess is one who exercises her influence even on the heavenly people (and not only on the terrestrial folk). Dr. Sharma's other assertions also are of similar nature and thus hold no ground.

Actually in the RV the heavenly and the earthly waters are not shut off from each other in water-tight compartments, each class involves the other. The heavenly waters fall in the form of rain and run in the rivers to the sea, while earthly waters owe their origin to the heavenly. Thus, if Sarasvatī, has links with 'celestial water' or 'other celestial beings' it cannot mean that she loses her terrestrial character. Many other epithets of Sarasvatī quoted by Dr. Sharma to prove her 'celestial character' and thus to refute her terrestrial character are, in fact, borne by many other terrestrial deities¹³.

1. 6, 61, 13.
2. 7, 36, 6.
3. 5, 43, 11.
4. 6, 31, 12.
5. 7, 96, 1. Almost all gods bear such a characteristic. Cf. V.M. p. 15.
6. 7, 96, 1.
7. 7, 95, 6.
8. The Vedic Sarasvatī, Calcutta Review, July, 1949, p. 55.
9. Ibid., p. 56.
10. Rgvedic Rivers, Indica, Bombay, 1953, p. 389.
11. These seers would have been coming from the tribes who lived on her banks. They included the Sunāhotras (2, 41, 17), the Vasiṣṭhas (7, 39, 5—Venkṭamādhava Comm.) the Bharatas to whom Divodāsa and Vadhryasva belonged (6, 61, 1) and the Purus (7, 96, 2).
12. CR., op. cit. p. 57.
13. Discussed below.

Sarasvatī, the Presiding Deity of the River of that name ?

We do not contribute to the view-point of the scholiasts who hold that it is not the river but the presiding deity of the river of that name who is worshipped by the Vedic sacrificer. That is, they mean by the 'river-goddess Sarasvatī,—Sarasvatī, who presides over the river or 'She of the river Sarasvatī'. The view-point of the scholiasts is based on their assertion that the Vedic seers did not indulge in worship which was fetishistic in character¹. They thought of the presence of a presiding deity (*adhiṣṭhātṛ devatā*) in inanimate objects like stone, herb and axe (which were actually worshipped by the Vedic sacrificer) in order to give a civilized look to the Vedic religion. But it seems more natural and hence convincing when we take that the Vedic worshipper worshipped and solicited such objects as were associated with the pious ritual. Attaching adoration and magnanimity to the inanimate ingredients or objects used in the ritual is quite credible. It is done even today. When thought of as associated with divinities, these objects would have been also deified by the Vedic worshipper and then the divine qualities would have been super-imposed on them. For their grandeur, beneficence and benignity, many phenomena of nature also would have been

deified by them; as a result of it sun, rivers, wind, forest, etc. were glorified and worshipped. Solicitations made to these objects definitely allude to this fact that they were thought of as containing the qualities of a godhead. Yāska himself seems to be referring to this fact indirectly when he says that the panegyrics are addressed with a particular desire to a deity from whom the worshipper wishes to obtain his desiderata². More explicitly we shall say that the objects or natural phenomena were worshipped and invoked by the Vedic worshipper because he saw in them the divine element³. Thus if the Vedic worshipper worshipped the sun or the moon, the nocturnal starry sky or the bright sky of the day, the fire ablaze on the hearth or on the altar, the flowing waters of clouds or of the rivers, it was because of the fact that he saw in these objects the divine shadow. As such to his mind, they could help and bestow boons and benefits on him who adored them, supplicated them. Thus we understand that it is the very object that is taken to be a godhead by the Vedic-worshipper, and with the gradual process of apotheosis he super-imposes the popular qualities of a godhead on this object and worships it. Therefore, when we talk of the river-goddess Sarasvatī here, we do not mean the presiding deity of river Sarasvatī but we take the Sarasvatī i. e., the river itself as the goddess Sarasvatī⁴.

The river Sarasvatī, too, would have been deified for its association with various divinities⁵, or being thought of as an earthly form of the celestial flood known as Sarasvatī or being the cradle of the Vedic culture, or being taken as possessed of divine qualities of providing opulent food and fertility, pelf, progeny, etc.—the desiderata of the Vedic worshipper. We shall see hereafter that in post-Rgvedic literature, the worship of the river (-goddess) continued without any break. For this reason, too, it is quite pertinent to think that such a worship in the RV also might have existed.

1. Yāska's Nir. 1, 15.
2. Nir. 7, 1. Also Cf. Br. Dev. 1, 6.
3. Sarasvatī, the river(-goddess) was worshipped in this way. See, e.g., 10, 64, 9.
4. In other words *Nadī-devatā* (river-goddess) is *nadī ca asau devatā* and not *nadyāḥ (adhiṣṭhātṛ) devatā*.
5. Similarly the sacred river Śvetayāvarī was glorified by Viśvamanā (8, 26, 18; 19) because it had its links with the Aśvins.

The swelling waves of the Sarasvati have been mentioned once and again in the RV. It has broken with its swift current the hilly ridges that fall in its way, those who dig up for lotus stems. Here we notice that the nature of the river in its first stage has been very correctly recorded, since the phenomenon of digging and deepening the course has been referred to here. Further more, the description of its swift-moving waters, too, shows that the river is mentioned as flowing in hilly tracts. Its great flood is made manifest by its deeds. The current of the river is limitless (*amanta*); unimpaired (*ahvita*); swift-moving (*vesa*), agile (*carisu*), mighty and goes ahead with a roaring sound. Its flood would have been causing havoc also some-times. This has been hinted at in an invocation—'With your waters bring prosperity to us, do not make us unthriving, with your water (i. e., flood) do not torment us. Respond to our friendship and obedience. (Uprooted by your flood) may we not go to far-off lands which are barren being devoid of you.' The reason of the swelling bed of Sarasvati can be well understood, if we turn to the study of the probable climatic conditions of the land watered by the Sarasvati. Mr. N. N. Godbole points out in this context that 'the climate must have been fairly cold (not hot as it is now) and the rains must have been very heavy (and not scanty as now).⁹ Carrying rainy waters the Sarasvati would have often run in spate, or ever flowed with a swelling bed; it is for this reason that it has been mentioned as one of those streams which swell fully with the volume of their own waters.⁹ Or such floods would have been the result of the fact that the Sarasvati was fed with many tributaries¹⁰ or heavenly rivers, i. e., rain coming down from clusters of clouds.

The waters of the Sarasvati are life-giving not only because they ward off enemies but also for the reason that they are fertile. Therefore, it is not a hyperbole when it is said that all the food rests in the Sarasvati, i. e., dependent on it.¹¹ The Sarasvati is one of those rivers which are rich in food (*yasaśa*) and which are possessed of copious milk (*su-dughā*, i. e., fertilizing and life-giving waters).¹² Its epithets *vājīnvatī*¹³ and *vājebhī vājīnvatī*¹⁴ speak of its richness in food which provides vigour, in the form of flora on its banks and crops dependent on its waters.

2. We learn from geomorphology that a river passes through three stages from its source to mouth. In the first stage the river flows through hilly tracts with swift currents and deepens its course. In the second stage it reaches the plains, flows slowly and effects erosion of its banks. In the third stage it forms a delta before reaching its mouth. See W. D. Thornbury, Geomorphology, John Wiley & Sons, INC, New York, 1954, pp. 137-40.
3. 1, 3, 12: *mahā arāṇā... prajāyati kṛtūna*.
4. According to Skandasaṃhita its flood is as fierce as a disease *amāh rogāḥ tat sadṛśaḥ/ Xaṭha rogo bhayānakaḥ tad vad āgacchati bhayānakaḥ ty- arthah*.
5. 6, 61, 14. Venkaiamādhava's view, that Sarasvati ran short of water (vide his comm. on this *te* where he explains *payasā mā na ā dhak* as *mā ca asman dhakṣiṭi udākābhāṭi*, 'do not torment us for want of water) cannot be entertained, because it is against the spirit of the contents of other passages in the RV (see, e. g., 6, 52, 6; 7, 36, 6 etc.) where the Sarasvati is spoken of as swelling with its waters, etc.
6. ABORI, Vol, Partis I-IV, p. 16.
7. Sarasvati is said as *sindhumatā*, who has (celestial) *sindhu* i. e., the cluster of clouds as her mother (7, 36, 6).
8. Dr. Krishnan in his 'Geology of India' (1958), pp. 22-26 points out that the rivers of the Punjab system are known to be very fickle and uncertain in their flow even to-day. They must have been much more so in the older periods when the monsoon and snowfalls were so changing in the post pleistocene period.
9. 7, 36, 6.
10. 6, 52, 6: *sindhuhīṭi pinvāmāna, sindhu* may mean here the celestial river or cluster of clouds as mentioned above. Venkaiamādhava interprets the passage *Sarasvati sinduhīṭi pinvāmāna* as *Sarasvati ca udakāt vāhāt-astu* (variant *mahāt-astu*), which means 'may Sarasvati flow being full of water'. Venkaiamādhava's interpretation presupposes that Sarasvati had run short of waters that is why she is prayed to come being swelled by other rivers. But such an interpretation does not seem to be nearer to the spirit of the worshipper who requests Sarasvati, the one being fed by a number of (celestial) streams, come to him (the worshipper) most often with protection. The theme contained in these lines is perhaps, the same as is contained in 6, 61, 14 *payasā mā na ā dhak*. That is, the devotee requests the river-goddess to visit him for his benefit not bane by her swelling currents.
11. 2, 41, 17.
12. 7, 36, 6.
13. 2, 41, 18.
14. 1, 3, 10.

Sarasvati—A Goddess of the Aerial Region

When once Sarasvati was counted by the Nighantu (5, 5) in the list of the aerial deities and later on taken by the Nairuktas as a Madhayanika Vāk, the later scholars interpreted all the *tes* of Sarasvati in two ways: (i) as a river and (ii) as a goddess of aerial region. They misunderstood the statement of Yaska

'nādivad devatāvac ca nigamā, bhavanti and therefore, explained wrongly even the most simple *ṛcs* pertaining to the river-goddess having taken her as an aerial goddess. In such an enthusiasm of theirs to explain Sarasvatī either as a goddess of aerial region in all *ṛcs* (save six or seven) or as a mere river, we come across some glaring mistakes committed by them. Some of the *ṛcs* held by them as belonging to the river belong really to the river-goddess. Take for example, the *ṛc* *'iyam śuṣmebhir bisakhā.....*, 6, 61, 2. It has been interpreted by the scholiasts, following Yāska, as a *ṛc* pertaining to the river Sarasvatī. But the majesty and grandeur of the river contained in the first half of the *ṛc* and the sincere suppliance expressed in the second half leave no doubt that Sarasvatī is to be taken here as a river-goddess and not as a river. In the Mait. S. (2, 5 4) Sarasvatī is treated as a goddess to whom offerings of animal-food are to be made accompanied by the recital of the present *ṛc* and the five *ṛcs* that follow it. Scholiasts, following the Nighaṇṭu (and the Nirukta also because they do not catch the real idea of the words of Yāska) would ever interpret in such contexts the goddess Sarasvatī as a deity of the aerial region, if they accept Sarasvatī here as a goddess², though the words—*'taviṣebhir ūrmibhiḥ pāṛāvatagnīm*—definitely refer to the character of the goddess. Again we see that 2, 41, 16 is a *ṛc* not pertaining to the river as the scholiasts take. The panegyric vocatives—*ambitame*³ *nāṭitame*, *devitame*—and the humble imploration of the suppliant who evokes the motherly affection and filial love of the goddess by the vocative, *amba*, for the attainment of an abstract gift of fame (*praśusti*) leave no doubt that the *ṛc* under reference is addressed to the goddess Sarasvatī of riverine nature.

The scholiasts are sometimes themselves confused and cannot decide whether a *ṛc* pertains to the river or to the goddess. Śaunaka takes 2, 41, 16 as a *ṛc* pertaining to the river Sarasvatī at one place (Br. Dev. 2, 137) but elsewhere (Br. Dev. 4, 92) takes it as one of three *ṛcs* (viz., RV 2, 41, 16; 17; 18) pertaining to Sarasvatī, a *pra-ūga devatā*. Sāyaṇa says that the first two pādas of a *Gāyatrī* (i. e., of 1, 3, 12) pertain to Sarasvatī, the river and the third one to Sarasvatī, the goddess. (Here he deviates from the interpretation of Yāska who quotes this *ṛc* as an example of Sarasvatī, the goddess. In addition to it, Yāska never said that one part of the *ṛc* pertains to the river and the other part to the goddess). Scholiasts differ among them-

selves on the list of the *mantras* pertaining to the river Sarasvatī. Again in the *ṛc* 6, 52, 6 Sarasvatī has been taken as a mere river by the scholiasts. But here all the four deities, of which Sarasvatī is one (the other three are Indra, Parjanya and Agni.), have been implored. It will be quite wrong to take Sarasvatī here as a mere river whom the prayer to come with protection has been made as to Indra.⁵ In 10, 75, 5 also all the river-goddesses (and not rivers) are requested to listen to their worshipper⁶.

We also think that whenever in a *ṛc* there is praise or a prayer, may it be of an animate or inanimate object, that should be treated as a *ṛc* pertaining to a *devatā* because praise or prayer has been made there taking that object as a deity or deified entity. That is, may there be a stone, axe or tree, when a worshipper makes a request to a certain object he super-imposes on it the divine qualities and understands it as divinity. Though Yāska himself decried the existence of the worship of fetishistic nature in Nir. 1, 15, yet in his words *yatkāmā ṛṣi yasyām devatāyām ārthapatyam icchan stutim prayunkte tad-daivataḥ sa manro bhavati*, 'a particular stanza is said to belong to a deity, to whom a seer addresses his panegyrics with a particular desire, or from whom he wishes to obtain his object',⁷ it is contained that the praise or prayer is made to a deity which in its turn determines the divinity to whom it is addressed. That praise or a prayer is made to a *devatā* and not to an object is also suggested in the words of Kātyāyana, *yā tenocyate sā devatā*, 'whatever is described or praised in a *mantra* is called *devatā* or a deity'. Again, the idea that praise or prayer is made to a deity is also suggested by the words of Br. Dev. 1, 6 which correspond to those of Nirukta quoted above.

On this count there is only one *mantra* in the whole of the RV which refers to the river Sarasvatī and that is 3, 23, 4 where neither praise of nor prayer to Sarasvatī has been made. In 8, 21, 18 also the scholiasts seem to have misunderstood the reference to Sarasvatī. Sāyaṇa explains *sarasvatīm anuvartante* i. e., 'they (kings) follow Sarasvatī' as *rājāṇaḥ eva sarasvatyās tīre vartante* i. e. 'kings alone reside on the banks of the Sarasvatī'. The context does not warrant such an explanation as of Sāyaṇa. Here the phrase means that 'they (the kings) follow (the actions of) Sarasvatī'. Which actions? Those which are referred to in the preceding *ṛc* (8, 21, 17) that is, bestowing wealth and treasure.

Thus in the *ṛc* the munificence of the goddess (i. e., her praise) is contained and therefore, this *mantra* should be taken as pertaining to the goddess and not to the river. In 10, 64, 9, too, Sarasvatī with Sarayū and Sindhu is invoked for bestowing her mighty help; she should not be taken; therefore, as a river here but a river-goddess.

Yaska did not quote any example where Sarasvatī is Vak or Madhyamika Vak. But to determine Sarasvatī as a Madhyama-sihana two qualities are to be kept in mind which are characteristic to an aerial deity⁹: (i) the deity should be connected with the downpour (*vasanupradna*) (ii) the deity should perform acts requiring prowess (*balakṛti*).

According to Skandasaṁhita Sarasvatī is often connected with these two characteristics. He says *pāvaka* means one that causes rain to fall; *codayitī sunitānā* means one that impels the aerial speech¹⁰, *āpaprutī* means one that fills up with her rain or thunderous voice¹¹, *hiraṇyavarīṇī* means one who has lightning as her path¹²; *apasmān* *apasmān* means one who is active among the active ones because of her activity of rain and the like¹³, and *nī paspharī payasā mā na ā dhak* means rain unto our prosperity not to our ravage¹⁴. Besides, the killing of Vitrā¹⁵ and slaying the son of Bṛhasa, the detractor¹⁶ are also ascribed to the goddess Sarasvatī. Sarasvatī is, therefore, taken as a goddess of the aerial region.

The explanation of certain functions and attributes put forth by Skandasaṁhita (and other scholars also) as we have seen above is, surely, strained and laboured in order to interpret Sarasvatī as a goddess of the aerial region. These functions and attributes fit well as natural and unaffected in the context of the river-goddess Sarasvatī rather than in the context of Madhyama-sihana Sarasvatī; *pāvaka* as such, means 'purifying'¹⁷, *sunitā* means 'speech construed in contrast to *amṛta* (falsehood) i. e., truth-ful speech'. Hence *sunitā* does not mean atmospheric speech¹⁸, *āpaprutī* means 'one who pervades', in this context one who pervades the terrestrial and atmospheric regions¹⁹. *Hiraṇyavarīṇī* means one who treads the golden path. This epithet either occurs in the context of Sarasvatī²⁰ or in the context of another river named Svetayavatī²¹. It suggests that the word is not to be connected with the atmospheric goddess. Rivers were believed to bring with them particles of gold from the mountains to the plains; Sarasvatī is believed even today as bringing with her sands tiny particles of gold. Where Sarasvatī just reaches the plains traversing hilly tracts the people there still sift riparian sands in

order to collect tiny particles of gold²². Sarasvatī is, therefore, said as *hiraṇyavarīṇī*. *Apasmān apasmān* 'most active amongst the active ones' is more characteristic to a river goddess than to an aerial goddess²³. She bears this epithet because of her agile flood²⁴ or because of her swift billows²⁵. *Māpaspharī payasā mā na ā dhak* is a request to the river-goddess not to overflow her banks and inundate the land of her devotees, causing devastation to their crops and quarters.

In this light we shall have to search for some fresh information in order to show that Sarasvatī is a goddess of aerial region.

Sarasvatī has been associated with the myth of killing Vitrā. One may not disagree with Dr. A. C. Das²⁶ that since the Sarasvatī provided space to the Aryan Angitrasas headed by Bṛhaspati for the performance of a *sattra*, 'session of ceremonies', as a preparation for the ensuing fierce struggle of Indra against the demon of drought, Vāla or Vitrā, therefore, the river-goddess Sarasvatī rightly bears the epithet *Vitrāghnī*. But Sarasvatī, in addition to it, must have helped Indra in his valiant act of slaying the wily Vitrā, an obstruction to flowing of the rivers (*nadinām paridhī*²⁷). She is not only *Vitrāghnī* in the sense that she supplies space for the preparation of the conflict but she is also herself *ghora*, 'fierce'²⁸. She would have also hurled the *vajra* on Vitrā. She undoubtedly possessed that weapon that is why she is said as *pāvani* (= *dyudhāvati*, Venkayamaḍhava and Sayana). This is an Indo-European characteristic of a weather-god. The deity concerned with fecundity, who displays his activity in the atmosphere possesses a 'Donnerkeil' as his weapon or an attribute. A 'Donnerkeil' (thunder weapon) is either represented as an axe (*vajra*) or lightning²⁹.

Allied with the Maruts, she must have been offensive in conflict as is clear by her attribute *dhṛivati*, 'inflicting injury'³⁰. In the context of the myth, we know that while all other gods once fled leaving Indra in the lurch, it was the Maruts alone who stood by Indra³¹. They helped Indra in his conflict with the dragon and Sambara³². The Maruts themselves smote Vitrā assisted by Indra³³. They sundered Vitrā limb by limb, split the gloomy rocky-clouds and thus performed a valiant act³⁴. The epithet *manudātī* 'possessed of the Maruts' borne by Sarasvatī is therefore, much significant and suggests the intrepidity of Sarasvatī rather than her mere association with the Maruts. It is this form

of Sarasvatī which the solicitor has in his mind while praying to Sarasvatī to kill his foes, when by her side Indra is doing to death Vṛtra, the Chief of the Śaṇḍikas³⁵.

At another place³⁶ Sarasvatī is prayed to kill the offspring of Bṛsaya, the detractor (*devanid*), pervading (*viśva*) (i. e. of wide influence) and employing stratagems (*māyin*). The offspring of Bṛsaya is undoubtedly Vṛtra³⁷ because killing Vṛtra is ever followed by copious rain³⁸ which has been unmistakably referred to in the words—*viṣamebhyo asravo vājīnīvatī*³⁹.

Sarasvatī's valiant nature (*balakṛti*) which is characteristic to an aerial god is quite manifest in her association with the myth of killing Vṛtra. Now this *balakṛti* is only instrumental to the act of *rasānupradāna*, 'pouring rain'. It is, therefore, enough to prove that Sarasvatī being a goddess of the aerial region is also connected with the act of shedding rain. Thus one need not labour to interpret all the attributes of Sarasvatī to conform to her form of an aerial goddess, since she is viewed in other forms also by the Vedic seer. But Sarasvatī's association with the Maruts and her contribution in the act of slaying Vṛtra and thereby causing rain to fall—are conducive to thinking of her place amongst the atmospheric deities⁴⁰.

5. *Sindhubhiḥ pinvāmānā* may be taken here as meaning swelling by the (celestial) rivers who feed the river-goddess Sarasvatī. Cf. Sarasvatī at another place (7, 36, 6) has been said as '*sindhumātā*'—one who has (celestial) Sindhu (oceans or big rivers) as her mother (i.e. source); it is to be noted here that for reasons of accent *sindhumātā* cannot be taken as *Tatpuruṣa* compound as the scholiasts have done.
6. Rivers (terrestrial goddesses—Nigh. 5, 3) have been glorified, worshipped and solicited to listen as divinities being considered as sacred because of their association with gods, or because of their beneficence and bounty towards men. (Explained supra p. 4 f.) Indra and the Maruts themselves tilled the region through which the Sarasvatī flowed (Av. 6, 30, 1). For her association with godheads, Sarasvatī herself would have become a godhead. In R.V., too, a R̥ṣi named Viśvamanā is sticking to the riparian region of the river Śvetayāvarī because it is sacred to him on account of its association with the Aśvins (8, 26, 18; 19); 'he glorifies the river as a goddess'—Sāyaṇa. If older R̥ṣis glorified Sarasvatī for her association with gods, it is no wonder that the younger R̥ṣis deified the river for her compassion towards their forefathers. Her association with the elder seers is alluded to (i) in the *ṛc* 6, 61, 10—*uta naḥ priyā—sujustā* (*sujṣtu purātanaḥ ṛṣibhiḥ sevītā*—Sāyaṇa), (ii) by the words *pūrvayā nividā* (1, 89, 3) and (iii) *Sarasvatīm sukrto ahvayanta* (10, 17, 7).
7. Nir. 7, 1.
8. Yāska, Nir. VII, 10.
9. Skandasvāmī's comm. on 1, 3, 10.
10. Ibid., 1, 3, 11.
11. Ibid., 6, 61, 11.
12. Ibid., 6, 61, 7.
13. Ibid., 6, 61, 13.
14. Ibid., 6, 61, 14.
15. 6, 61, 7.
16. 6, 61, 3.
17. This meaning of the word is quite natural; '*pāvaka*' is almost a distinct epithet of Agni, who purifies.
18. Compare, Uṣas is said as '*sunṛtāpatī*' possessed of truthful speech. Nigh. 1, 8.
19. This is a characteristic which is shared by most of the R̥gvedic gods. Almost all gods have been associated with the two regions. VM. p. 15
20. 6, 61, 7. Sāyaṇa (comm. 8, 25, 18) interprets the word—*hiraṇmaya-sviyamārgā hiraṇmayobhayakūlā*. Cf. Sindhu is also called rich in gold *hiraṇyayī*—10, 75, 8. Griffith and Bhattacharya (K.B. Pathak Comm. Vol. p. 36 n. 2) take Śvetayāvarī as an attribute of Sindhu in 8, 26, 18.
21. 8, 26, 18.
22. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XXII, Oxford, 1908, p. 97.
23. This epithet is shared by the river-god Sindhu also, 10, 75, 8.
24. *Çarīṣṇu arṇavaḥ*—6, 61, 8.
25. 6, 61, 2.
26. R̥gvedic India p. 56-58.
27. 3, 33, 6. The word Vṛtra (neuter) originally represented 'an abstract idea of obstruction' Louis Renou, *Religions of India*, London, 1953, p. 19.

1. Nir. 11. 27- *vāgartheṣu vidhīyate | Mādhyamikām vācam manyante |*

2. Durga explains this *ṛc* in two forms—(i) pertaining to the river and (ii) pertaining to the goddess of aerial region. In the context of the latter form his interpretation—*devatāpakṣe Sarasvatī mādhyamikā vāk | Sā meghānām (giriṇām) sātāni bhañjati mahadbhiḥ taviṣebhiḥ stanayitnubhiḥ (urmi-bhiḥ) dyāvāpṛthivyau hanti (pārāvataḥgnī).....* etc. is unnatural, strained and not convincing.

3. Cf. *mātṛtamā*, RV 3, 33, 3, an epithet of Vipāt, another river-goddess.

4. According to Skandasvāmī (vide his comm. on 6, 61, 2) Śākapūnī believed that 2, 41, 16; 3, 23, 4; 8, 21, 18; 10, 75, 5;—the five *mantras* only pertain to the Sarasvatī (river). Skandasvāmī adds in this list the *mantra* 6, 61, 2. Śaunaka (Br. Dev. 2, 136-137) asserts that there are only six *mantras* of the river Sarasvatī and the seventh of such a type is not found. His list comprises of 2, 41, 16; 3, 23, 4; 6, 52, 6; 7, 95, 2; 8, 21, 18; and 10, 64, 9; but he says that Yāska accepts 6, 61, 2 as the seventh in the series. But in all these *ṛcs* except one viz., 3, 23, 4, Sarasvatī has been invoked or eulogized as a river goddess.

28. 6, 61, 7. See Chr. Blinkenberg, The thunder weapon in religion and folklore, Cambridge, 1911. Sarasvatī is comparable here with the Babylonian goddess Ishtar (see G. Contenau, La déesse nue baby-lonienne, Paris 1914, p. 120 f.) and the Iranian Anahitā (see E. Benveniste, The Persian religion according to the chief Greek texts, Paris 1929, p. 27 f. and p. 61 ff.) who have double character combining fecundity and warlike courage.
30. 2, 30, 8. 31. VM. p. 60. 32. RV 3, 47, 3-4. 33. 1, 23, 9. 34. 8, 7, 23.
35. Śaṅgā (comm. 2, 30, 8) quoting Taitt. S. 6, 4, 10, 1 shows that Śaṇḍa means *asura*; Venkamaḍhava here is more specific when he interprets the chief among the Śaṅgikas as Vitrā.
36. 6, 61, 3.
37. Śaṅgā following Venkamaḍhava rightly points out that Bṛhasya is the father of Vitrā but Skandavarṇan and most of the modern scholars (Ved. Ind. Vol. II, p. 70) incorrectly take Bṛhasya as a particular caste or class (*jātivṛṣṭa*), probably that of the sorcerers which has been decried and reprimanded in the RV. At another place (I, 93, 3) Agni-Soma, a dual divinity having killed the offspring of Bṛhasya secured one particular light for many. Now 'winning the light' is a fruit that is accrued after killing Vitrā; see e.g., 3, 34, 8; 8, 78, 4. Hence the offspring of Bṛhasya is Vitrā and none else.
38. Cf. 3, 34, 8, 9.
39. Vitrā is not here the poison but water (Nigh. 1, 12) rather rain-water when viewed in the presence of the verb, *asṛavaḥ*.
40. Both the divinities—Sarasvatī and the Maruts are prayed to be pleased with the pāṇegrics of the Vasisthas, 7, 39, 5; both are requested to respond and confer wealth with noble offspring, 3, 54, 13, the man, who is favoured by the Maruts, is extended a helping hand by Sarasvatī and Agni, too, nobody then is able to relieve him of his riches, 7, 40, 3; for her association with the Maruts, she bears the epithets—*Maruṣakha* (7, 96, 2) and *Marudāt* (2, 30, 8).

Dumézil classifies Sarasvatī amongst the deities of 'third function' and thus associates her with peasantry and mercantile society. This characteristic which might have been borne by Sarasvatī, or by her representative goddess in the Indo-European pantheon, was retained by her even as an Aryan goddess. But as a result of the local influence, she developed the characteristics around her person of the goddess of 'second function'. That is, she came to be associated with warrior class—the people who worshipped the deities of the 'second function'.

The RV alludes the fact that rituals were performed even at the onset of conflicts. Religious ceremonies seem to have

been hampered by the detractors and the niggardly Pāṇis at home and by invaders like the Parāvatas from abroad. In these circumstances, the warrior class (which would have assumed the form of caste by then) ran into prominence politically. This class of warriors had taken the god of thunder and lightning—Indra, for its god of battle. It was natural for a fighting race to exalt the highest fighting god of the pantheon. Amongst the goddesses Sarasvatī's characteristics stood akin to Indra. As a deity of atmospheric region, she, too, was endowed with the qualities of *balakṛti*, 'act of valiance', and *rasānupradāna*, 'shedding the rain', which were similar to those of Indra. As a result of this similarity, she was given such attributes as were characteristic of Indra. See, for example, her attributes—*vīraḥ*, *maruṣakha*, *marud-vat*, *pāvitrā*, *ghora*, *akavāṛ*, *vāṇ* and *vīraḥ*, *maruṣakha*, *marud-van*, *pāvitrā-van*, *ghora*, *akavāṛ*, *vāṇ* and *vīra*. This similarity of the attributes of Sarasvatī to those of Indra definitely alludes to the close association of Sarasvatī with Indra, the god of the warrior class. Hence we can say that Sarasvatī, too, was exalted by this warrior class (or caste) as a goddess of battle.

She was thus prayed to wipe out those who censured the gods and protect her devotees from such detractors. Allied with the Maruts (the chief allies of Indra in his conflict against Vitrā), she is prayed to provide protection against foes and conquer them like Indra who beheads the fierce and mighty chieftain of the Śaṅgikas (i.e., Vitrā—Śaṅgā). She is invoked to slay singly Vitrā, son of the cunning Bṛhasya¹⁰ who has wide spread influence¹¹. She is besought to protect the devotee who invokes her like Indra at the onset of the battle (*vīratīrye*) which is fought for the attainment of wealth (*dhanam hite*).¹² Strong or possessed of army¹³ (*vājim*) Sarasvatī is solicited to supply succour during battles (*vāṇ*) also¹⁴. She has been making prosperous the famous Five People (because of her unstinted support and succour to them in their perilous adventures) and, therefore, she should be invoked in every conflict (*vāṇe vāṇe yuddhe yuddhe sarveṣu yuddheṣu*—Śaṅgā¹⁵). Or she was invoked at the beginning of every conflict because her mettle in the battle-field was established among celestial beings; as we know that allied with the Maruts, she would have been offensive, in the conflict against Vitrā, for the benefit of the Five People, as is shown by her attri-

bute *dhṛṣṭi*, 'inflicting injury'¹⁶. She was possessed of a weapon hence her epithet *pāvīravī*¹⁷.

But the protective support of this goddess of the warrior class was not available to privileged warriors alone, it was also available to commoners. She, along with Agni and the Maruts, protects the riches of the devotee from the robbers¹⁸. A supplication to Sarasvatī by a commoner is interesting in this context: As Sūrya gets across day after day incessantly and never lets it (the day) come back again, so may Sarasvatī digress over fiends in addition to our foes¹⁹. Here again Sarasvatī comes nearer to Indra who is said to have been created by gods as a destroyer of fiends²⁰.

But how did the river-goddess Sarasvatī provide protection to her mundane protégés? It seems that her currents would have constituted a permanent barrier against the inroads of morose marauders.

We have ample information in the RV to postulate that there had been warlike activities on her banks. Divodāsa, a warrior of rank, who revenged the defeat of his forefathers and was therefore styled 'canceller of debts', who annihilated the Panis (the churlish niggard) and hence said as fierce (*robhasa*), who was born to Vadhryasva by the benison of the goddess Sarasvatī, lived on her banks²¹. The Śunahotras, the Purus and the Vaśiṣṭhas lived on the banks of Sarasvatī and it seems that in their steady progress east-wards²², the Aryan tribes were stopped for a time in the region of the Sarasvatī and were unable to find their way through the masses of the aborigines holding the great gateway of India²³. These aboriginals were, in all probability, the Pārāvatas with whom the Aryans might have come into conflict. Perhaps a decisive battle with the Pārāvatas would have been fought then on the banks of the Sarasvatī as is suggested by her epithet *Pārāvataḥni*²⁴.

Sarasvatī, the easternmost region of the Aryans, would have been subjected to repeated inroads by the Pārāvatas. They would have been defeated on the banks of the Sarasvatī, and while fleeing had been swept away in the swift-billows of the river flowing in its hilly course because they would have failed in haste to manage those means to cross the river by which they had crossed it earlier. Thus the Pārāvatas could not swim to their life back to their lands. The river-goddess was thus called *pārāvataḥni*.

In a Dānastuti of Citra²⁵, it is indicated that the king celebrated its victory in a recent battle on the banks of the Sarasvatī. The gift referred to here as worthy of being given by Indra, Sarasvatī or Citra is nothing but booty, almost a shower of wealth (*parjanya it tatanad hi vṛṣṭyā*) as he gave in thousands (*sahasramayutā dadāt*). After the act of his chivalry (which is implied here and not mentioned) he made such an outstanding gift to his accomplices in intrepidity as other princes could not do for which they appeared as diminutive in status (i.e. kinglings) in comparison with him.

Sarasvatī has also been said as *vīra-patnī*²⁶, which according to one meaning is *virāṇām pālayitrī* 'the protectress of the heroes'. We have shown below that *vīra-patnī* means the protectress of *vīra* Indra. However, it will be quite natural to think, in the light of the discussion recorded above about *Pārāvataḥni* that Sarasvatī, who was on one hand a protectress of Indra, on the other hand she was a protectress of the Aryans. In another *ṛc*²⁷, *virapatnī* is used as a proper name for the river (which is none else but Sarasvatī) that along with other two river-goddesses Añjasī and Kulaśī delight Indra with their waters rich in butter. Again in another *ṛc*²⁸ Indra is said to have formed nectar in the three rivers which in all probability are those as mentioned above i.e., Sarasvatī, Añjasī and Kulaśī. In this prayer it is implied that the warriors are reminded of the waters of Sarasvatī which saved them and thus they thought as if they were nectar for them and it was Indra, the god of war who had created nectar, the life-giving fluid. Thus Sarasvatī and Indra were glorified by the warriors living on the banks of the Sarasvatī.

The same idea is contained in a verse where gushing water (*pra-kṣodas*) of Sarasvatī is characterised as life-bestowing (*dhāyas*). The river was thus a natural Warden of the Marches for the Aryan clans. It is no wonder then that the Aryans called Sarasvatī 'a fortress of iron', (*āyāṣī pūh*), 'the sure defence' (*dharuṇam*).

Sarasvatī's epithet *pañca-jātā vardhayanti*²⁹ also fits her person as a goddess of the warrior class. The Five People, being the beneficiaries of Indra³⁰ were, in all probability, the warrior classes who played an active role in the growth of the Vedic ritual. Sarasvatī like Indra made them to thrive by her succour rendered to them in various ways, i.e., in peace by her power of fecundity and in war by the prowess and agility of her swelling currents.

11. 6, 61, 3. 12. 6, 61, 5. Skandavāmi : *vājo balaṃ vego vā, tadavāi vājini/Kā Saṃ/Sarasvatyaḥ svabhūta senā.*
13. 6, 61, 6. 15. 6, 61, 12. 16. 2, 30, 8. 17. 6, 49, 7; 10, 65, 13. 18. 7, 40, 3. 19. 6, 61, 3. Translation here is based on the comm. of Skandavāmi.
20. 3, 49, 1. 21. 6, 61, 1. Hillebrandt has given an account of his martial career, Ved. Ind. Vol. I p. 363.
22. Oldenberg says that the general direction of the Aryan migrants was from cold and poor lands to those warmer and richer, Griswold, The Religion of the R̥gveda, p. 45.
23. "That what really stopped the Aryan advance was dense aboriginal population of the Jumna-Ganges valley" says James Kennedy: The Aryan Invasion of Northern India JRAS, October, 1919, p. 513. The interpretation by scholars of *Parāvataḥ* as 'one that cuts at its banks' seems to be wrong. Firstly, we have in Nigh. III, 26, *parāvataḥ-dāraṇama, pārāvataḥ* would thus mean the people coming from distant lands. Secondly, such a people actually lived on the hilly tracts of the Yamuna, who were sometimes at war and sometimes at peace with the Aryans according to the Pāṇcaviṃśa Br. 9, 4, 11. Hillebrandt's suggestion (Ved. Ind. Vol. I, p. 519) that they were originally mountaineers seem to be convincing because their reference in R̥v. 6, 61, 2, too, is made by the side of the Sarasvatī flowing in hilly tracts. Thirdly, the equation of *parāvata* with *pārāvata* (Nir. 2, 24) is not convincing linguistically for want of morphological similarity in second half of both these words. Fourthly, we have root *han, himsyām* i. e., 'to injure' but nowhere in the Veda has it been applied to mean 'to erode'. On the other hand the suffixes *han, hant* mean 'slayer' in the words *vitrāḥ* and *vitrāghant*. Fifthly, Sarasvatī's epithet 'killer of the Pāravatas' is perfectly in apposition with her other attributes *ghorā* and *Vitrāghant*. Sixthly, in the context, Sarasvatī is said to be flowing in the hilly region. Erosion of banks according to by Thornbury (Geomorphology, John Wiley & Sons, I. N. C. New York, 1954, p. 40) is effected only when the river is in the second stage i. e., in the plains while it deepens its course when it flows in the hilly tracts.
25. 8, 21, 17; 18. 26. 6, 49, 7. 27. 1, 104, 4; it seems to be a glorification of Indra made by a successful warrior.
28. 6, 47, 4. 29. 6, 61, 12. 30. See below under discussion of the epithet *parā-jāt vardhyanānti*.
31. 'Help' here may mean help in the battle-field. *Tam yudhyamānaṃ avase hantānti*, 'whom (i.e., to Indra) they (i.e., the warriors) summon for help (in the battle-field)', 2, 12, 9.
32. Nigh. 2, 21—*aivasya-karmāṇāḥ*.
33. *Dadhē—dhātvoḥ, pōjyo—Sāyana.*

Thinking on these lines, we can explain the solicitation made to the Sarasvatī in 6, 52, 6. Sarasvatī, who is swelling with her streams, is requested here, by the side of Indra, to come near to the worshippier (i.e., the worshippier warrior) for protection. That is, the ever swelling bed of the river-goddess would have been for the Aryans a sure protection. Perhaps the same idea is repeated in 10, 64, 9 where Sarasvatī, Sarayu and Sindhu are requested to come nearer the worshippier for help (*avase*) (in the battle-field)²¹. Similarly 1, 3, 12 also, probably, means that she makes manifest (*pra-ceḥayati*) her mighty flood (*mūho-araṇāḥ*) by her (prompt) action (*ketund*) (against the enemies); i.e., her mighty flood is looked upon with honour by the people, for she has swept away by her swift billows the fleeing hordes of the alien forces who had come to disturb the sacrifice or plunder the Aryans; she is, therefore, said to preside over (*rajati*)²² the sacrificial acts or prayers of the suppliant (*dhīyāḥ*). That is, by virtue of her mighty flood, the sacrificial acts are being carried on uninterruptedly for the non-existence of any fear from the aliens. In the preceding *rc* (1, 3, 11), too, she is requested to protect or strengthen²³ the sacrifice. Because she provided protection and ample room and atmosphere to the Vedic ritualist, she is styled 'an impeller of beautiful songs' (*codayitṛ suntanām*) and an 'inspiter of noble thoughts' (*celanti sunatnam*).

1. Refer to C. Scott Littleton, The New Comparative Mythology, California, 1966, pp. 9-11. According to Dumézil Indo-European deities of 'first function' were popular amongst intellectuals, of 'second function' amongst warriors and those of 'third function' amongst peasantry and mercantile class.
2. 6, 61, 5. 3. *Deva-nidāḥ*—6, 61, 3. 4. 6, 61, 1.
5. Refer to her epithet *parāvataḥ*, killer of the Pāravatas, 6, 61, 2. In the context of the Saurāṣṭrī in the later Vedic texts we read that Sarasvatī was consulted by Indra in the acts of prowess.
- 6, 61, 11. Skandavāmi's interpretation is different from that of Sayana and Vekkaṭamādhava. He does not render *nidāḥ* as 'destructor of gods' but he renders it as *minditṛ nindato vā*—i.e., according to him, Sarasvatī here has been prayed to protect from the ignominious or from the ignominy.
8. The Maruts alone stood by Indra at the time when all gods had fled leaving Indra in the lurch in his conflict against Vitrā (4, 18, 11; 8, 85, 7 and also Ait. Br. 3, 20).
9. 2, 30, 8.
10. Sayana, however, holds that Indra killed Vitrā with the help of Sarasvatī. This is alluded to by his words—*taṃ sūryādāśendoḥ hataṃ*—*ity-arhāḥ*.

Sarasvatī's Association with Other Gods

Though there are very many prayers and panegyrics of individual gods, but no god, may he be the mightiest amongst all, has been shown as functioning independently of all, when all spheres of his action are taken into account. He may be performing this act or that one in his individual capacity but most of his functions are witnessed as being carried out in association with other divinities. Such an association is frequent and varied in case of Sarasvatī, as in case of other divinities. Her relations with other deities have been ever pleasing, friendly and helping because we do not meet with any reference in which she has been shown as hostile to any other divinity. Out of all the places in the RV, where she is referred to, her association with other gods and goddesses is indicated in nearly two-third of the passages.

A consideration of Sarasvatī's association with other gods and of the purport of those passages in which she is mentioned in their company will be greatly helpful in revealing the character of the goddess.

The number of deities with whom Sarasvatī is more than incidentally associated is not very large. In the *sūktas* addressed to Viśvedevāḥ, Sarasvatī's name is several times mentioned together with Indra, the Maruts, Agni, Pūṣan, Dhī, Puramdhi, Aja Ekapād, Sindhu, Ādityas, Soma, Aśvins, Bhaga, Pitṛs, Sarasvat, Parjanya, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aditi, Viśvedevāḥ, Devāḥ, Maruta, Gnāḥ, Rudra, Bṛhaddivā, Rākā, Indrāṇi, Varuṇāni Gungū, Sinivālī, Vāyu, Vāta Vidhātṛ, Damunasah, Prthivi, Parvataḥ, Vanaspati, Sapta-sindhavaḥ, Bṛhaspati, Tvaṣṭṛ, Savitr, Brahmanaspati, Aryaman & Viṣṇu¹. In similar texts showing fewer names Sarasvatī is often joined with the Maruts, Indra, the Aśvins, Agni, the Āpaḥ and the Rivers. If any desire is expressed at all these divine powers are implored for blessing, happiness, food, protection and to be accordant with the worshipper or listen to his solicitation or visit the place of sacrifice².

1. Refer to 1, 89, 3; 2, 32, 8; 5, 42, 12; 46, 2; 6, 50, 12; 52, 6; 7, 9, 5; 35, 11; 39, 5; 8, 54, 4; 9, 81, 4; 10, 65, 1; 13; 66, 5; 141, 5; 184, 2.

2. 5, 42, 12; 46, 2; 9, 81, 4; 10, 65, 13; 75, 5.

Sarasvatī and Indra

Discussing the atmospheric form of the goddess we have already observed that Sarasvatī is depicted as performing the acts of valiance (*balakṛti*) and shedding rain (*rasānupradāna*) which are peculiar to the deities of Indra's group¹. Since Sarasvatī stood by the side of Indra when he did to death the chieftain of the Śandikas², for reasons of prowess as such, she has been once compared to Indra in the context of the onset of a battle³. Again discussing her as a goddess related to the warrior class, we have also seen that Sarasvatī bears some attributes corresponding literally to those of Indra which speak of her close relationship with him.

Sarasvatī, in conjunction with the Aśvins, cured Indra when he had overdrunk the liquor that gladdens (*surāmam*) and was confronting Namuci of Asura birth⁴. Since the waters of the river-goddess Sarasvatī are said to be invigorating being rich in fatness and honey etc⁵, and hence possessing a remedial value⁶, it is no wonder that she cured Indra by them⁷. Since Sarasvatī cured Indra, she is called *vīra-patnī*, the protectress of the *vīra* (Indra). This idea is again contained in a *ṛc* where Indra is said as being delighted by three rivers, to wit, the Añjasi, the Kuliśī and the Virapatnī, who bear milk upon their waters⁸. Virapatnī, the river-goddess in this *ṛc* is none else but Sarasvatī. Indra seems to have repaid his indebtedness to these three rivers when he is said as forming nectar in them⁹. Though the names of these three rivers are not mentioned here but they can be well identified with the Añjasi, the Kuliśī and the Virapatnī who have been formerly stated as associated with Indra. At another place the river-goddess Sarasvatī being one of the Seven Rivers¹⁰ is a recipient of munificence of Indra who smote Vṛtra in order to release waters of seven rivers.¹¹

Sarasvatī and Indra are the standards of comparison amongst the munificent few, like the king Citra who shower wealth and great treasure on the worshipper¹².

1. Nir. VII, 10. 2. 2, 30, 8. 3. 6, 61, 5. 4. 10, 13, 4; 5.

5. 7, 56, 6; 9, 64, 32.

6. Cf. Amṛta is in the waters, in the waters healing medicine', RV 1, 23, 19.

7. Weber suggests (what Griffith calls a rationalistic explanation) that Sarasvatī, the river, that is cold water is referred to here; Texts of the White Yajurveda, Griffith, Banāras, 1957, p. 228, note.

11. *Asvatthā saratvā sapta-sindhun-*1, 32, 12. From 8, 69, 12 we know that

Varuṇa also holds a sway on the 'seven-rivers': 'Sudeva asi Varuṇa

te yasya Sapta-sindhavah.

12, 8, 21, 17.

Sarasvatī and Agni

In a prayer¹ Agni has been requested to bring all gods

(in general) and Sarasvatī, the Maruts, Aśvins and the waters in particular) so that they may confer riches on sacrificers. In another prayer² Sarasvatī and the Maruts are requested to be joyful (i. e., gracious towards the sacrificer) through an invoca-

tion to Agni. Both the divinities, Sarasvatī and Agni, promote the worshipper who is a favourite of the Maruts; because of their majesty, there is none then who may plunder his pelf³.

In another prayer⁴ Sarasvatī, along with Damaṇasah⁵ (the Domestic Ones) (i. e., Agnis of the three regions) and others, is requested to befriend worshippers.

Dr. A. C. Das⁶ says "Sarasvatī in the RV is the name of Agni or sacrificial Fire. The Fire first kindled in the region of Sarasvatī, was called by that name. This observation of Dr. Das seems to be true, because it is this Fire which is intent in the prayers of the Tisto Devī. In a *rc*⁷ Agni is equated with each goddess of the triad, i. e., Iṣā, Sarasvatī and Bhāratī. Bhāratī with the Bhāratīs (i. e., goddesses subordinate to her)⁸ Iṣā with gods and Sarasvatī with the Sarasvatās⁹ are requested to be seated on the sacred grass strewn by the side of the altar along with Agni accompanied by men¹⁰.

At least three epithets *pāvaka*, *dhīya-vasuḥ* and *irīśadhastha* (explained below) which are characteristic of Agni are borne by Sarasvatī. They also speak of affinity between them.

1, 7, 9, 5. 2, 7, 39, 5. 3, 7, 40, 3. 4, 5, 42, 12

5. Damaṇasah is an epithet which seems to be standing for terrestrial, atmospheric and celestial Agnis. It is characteristically borne by Agni, though twice (1, 123, 3; 6, 71, 4) Savitī also is spoken of as *damaṇas-VM*, p. 33.

6. Op. cit. p. 57. 7, 2, 1, 11. 8. *sadnu-caribhiḥ* (—) Venkajamadhava. 9. Gods subordinate to her—Venkajamadhava. 10. 3, 4; 8 (=7, 2, 8).

Sarasvatī and Indra-Agni

Indra-Agni, a dual divinity, is said to be, 'possessed of Sarasvatī'; (*saravastivatiḥ*) whose grace is sought by the worshipper. This epithet speaks of the close relationship of the goddess with both Indra and Agni (the members of the dual divinity).²

1. 8, 38, 10. Sayana interprets *Sarasvatī* here as *stuti*, and renders *Sarasvatī-vaḥ* by *stuti-matoh*, 'possessors (in dual number) of panegyric', i. e., 'worshipful'. Dr. Surya Kantā (Saras, Soma and Sira, ABORI Vol. XXXVIII, Parts I-II, p. 128) says: "The word '*Sarasvatī-vaḥ*' is explained by '*yābhyāṁ gūyātram tpyat*' and this also is a hint at the real meaning of *saras* (=soma)". That is, *Sarasvatī* would mean here 'Soma-vaḥ' according to Dr. Surya Kantā. But this is a far-fetched meaning. *Sarasvatī* here may be taken in her usual form—a goddess of terrestrial or atmospheric region.

2. In the Vedic idiom we observe that an attribute of a deity which consists of the suffix *matuh*, appended to the appellation of a second deity, shows the close relationship of the former with the latter; see, for example, Indra is referred to as *Marud-vaṇ* (1, 20, 15; 23, 7; 8, 76, 1; 4, 6; 8, etc.) and *Sarasvatī* as *Marud-vaṇ* (2, 30, 8) in order to show that there exists a close relationship between the Maruts and *Sarasvatī* and again that between the Maruts and *Sarasvatī*.

Sarasvatī and the Maruts

Sarasvatī has often been associated with the Maruts¹, and as such has acquired a very prominent and at the same time an exclusive attribute *Marud-vaṇ*, 'attended by the Maruts'.² She has been also a *Marut-sakha*, 'a comrade of the Maruts'.³ These attributes are true to their spirit inasmuch as the sphere of activity of *Sarasvatī* is almost identical to that of the Maruts. The Maruts like *Sarasvatī* are associated with lightning, thunder, wind and rains and as such their activities in the RV are generally confined to the atmospheric region.⁴

In some prayers where reference to a number of deities including *Sarasvatī* and the Maruts is made, *Sarasvatī* (not because of any pre-eminence but because of the need of the metre, perhaps), is mentioned immediately ahead of the Maruts.⁵ These references, too, tend to show the nearness of relations between the two divinities. In a prayer to the *Viśvedevāḥ*,⁶ we may read some more closeness in the relations of *Sarasvatī* and the Maruts. The *rc* mainly contains the praise of and prayer to the Maruts (as is alluded to by the beginning and the ending of the *rc*). The insertion of a prayer to *Sarasvatī* in between makes us think that the two divinities would

have been thought by the Vedic Ṛṣi as acting conjointly in certain spheres. The prayer : *dhātā rayīm saḥavīram turāsaḥ*, 'O Mighty ones, may you give us riches with noble male issues', contained in the fourth pāda of this ṛc alludes to their sphere of influence⁷. Another corresponding prayer *dhātā rayīm avidasyam sadāsām* is made to these two divinities.⁸ In order to determine the degree or type of their relationship, we shall read between the lines of the ṛc 7, 40, 3 : 'Strong be the man and full of power, O Maruts, whom ye, borne on by spotted courses, favour. Him, too, Sarasvatī and Agni further, and there is none to rob him of his riches⁹. According to an interpretation of this ṛc, a person, who is favoured by the Maruts, is also gladdened by Agni and Sarasvatī, their (of the Maruts) attendants¹⁰. This does not seem to be correct. The underlying idea, in all probability, is that to a person who is favoured by the Maruts Sarasvatī and Agni also being the allies of the Maruts become favourable. So Sarasvatī and Agni seem here to be *sahacaras*, 'friends' of the Maruts and not *anucaras*, 'attendants'. Moreover, Sarasvatī (in 7,96,2) and Agni (in 8, 103, 14) both (as we have mentioned above) are styled as *Marut-sakhā*, 'comrade of the Maruts' which clearly shows the type of their relationship. That is, they should be ranked as friends to the Maruts.

Sarasvatī and the Maruts have a common parenthood, because both the divinities have the (celestial) ocean as their mother.¹¹

1. 3, 54, 13; 7, 9, 5; 39, 5; 40, 3. 2. 2, 30, 8.

3. These attributes also indicate the relation of Sarasvatī with Indra who is Maruvān and Marut-sakhā, 8, 76,1-9. Though these epithets are sometimes applied to other gods (e. g., to Agni, 8, 103, 14) but they are characteristic of Indra. Cf. VM, p. 57. Besides Indra, Indrāṇi also by virtue of her husband once shares this epithet (10, 86, 9).

4. See, e. g., 1, 38, 9; 5, 53, 6; 10, 54, 3; 59, 5; 7, 8; 65, 13.

5. 7, 9, 5; 7, 39, 5. 6. 3, 54, 13.

7. But it is not their exclusive sphere of action. Other gods also have been prayed in the similar style. See, e. g., a prayer to Indra : *asme rayīm rāsi viravantam*, 2, 11, 13.

8. 7, 39, 6. It is not a prayer to Viśvedevāḥ, 'gods in general'. In the preceding ṛc i. e., 7, 39, 5. Sarasvatī and the Maruts alone, in contrast to other divinities, are spoken of in the nominative who may be connected with verb contained in the ṛc that follows i. e., 7, 39, 6.

9. Translation by R. T. H. Griffith.

10. See Venkṭamādhava's comm. *Api ca enam Agniḥ Sarasvatī ca tad anucarāś ca*.

11. Cf. Sarasvatī's epithet *Sindhumātā* (7, 36, 6) and that of the Maruts *Sindhumātaraḥ* (10, 78, 6). For reasons of accent both are to be taken as *Bahuvrihi* compounds.

Sarasvatī and the Aśvins

We have already observed that with the Aśvins Sarasvatī acted as a physician once in the RV (but regularly as such in the Yajurveda¹) to cure Indra who had overdrunk Soma².

Allied with the Aśvins and Sinivālī, Sarasvatī is invoked to make a woman fruitful³. Keeping in mind the process of the development of conception (embryo), Viṣṇu is solicited to fashion vulva (*yoni*), Tvaṣṭṛ to shape the form (*rūpāṇi*), Prajāpati to water i. e. sprinkle semen, Dhātṛ (the Creator) to bestow conception (*garbha*)⁴. Sinivālī, Sarasvatī and the Aśvins are implored to hold and protect the implanted impregnation (*niṣikṭam garbham*—Sāyaṇa). With the Aśvins, the divine physicians famous for their remedial succour, Sarasvatī has been requested here to grant conception and guard it from miscarriage.

Like the Maruts, the Aśvins also are said to have the *sindhu* (celestial ocean) as their mother⁵, therefore, all the three divinities are conceived to have a common source in heaven.

1. See the contexts of the Sautrāmaṇi in the Vajasaneyī Samhitā, Books XIX-XXI.

2. 10, 131, 4; 5. 3. 10, 184, 2. 4. 10, 184, 1. 5. 1, 46, 2.

Sarasvatī and Nadyah

The Rivers have been treated as divine beings and glorified with prayers and eulogies. The Nighaṇṭu¹ classifies them amongst terrestrial deities. Sarasvatī along with Sarayu and Sindhu is once requested to come nearer to the worshipper for help². In the *Nadī-sūkta* also Sarasvatī has been requested to hear call of the worshipper in conjunction with six other major (*pradhāna-bhūtāḥ*—Sāyaṇa)³ and three minor (*avayava bhūtāḥ*)⁴ river-goddesses. Sarasvatī is referred to as *saptathī sindhumātā*, 'seventh (river) having (celestial) ocean as its mother.' That is, she is one of the river-goddesses who are flowing (*suṣvayanta*) together, full of food (*yaśasaḥ annavatyah*—Sāyaṇa), full of fondness (*vāvaśārāḥ kāmayaṁāṇāḥ*), of copious milk, of fair streams, swelling fully with their own waters. In other words, Sarasvatī is spoken of as a constituent of river-goddesses (*nadyah*). This fact is also alluded to in another prayer⁵ where the *nadyah* are said

as *vibhavaśaśāḥ* 'carved out by Vibhava' i.e., 'Prajapati' and Sarasvatī being one of them, therefore, said as *Vibhavaḥ kṛtā*, 'made by Vibhava (Prajapati)'.

Often the river-goddess Sarasvatī is spoken of in superlative terms amongst the sister-rivers; she is thus said *asuryā nadinām*, 'divine amongst the rivers', *nadinām śucīḥ*, 'pure amongst the rivers', *nadinām*, 'best amongst the rivers'. The Vedic R̥sis, though acquainted with numerous rivers including the Sindhu and the Gaṅgā, call Sarasvatī the best, strongest, swiftest, purest, most divine, etc.

She is also called *sindhumnātā*¹² which is wrongly translated as 'mother of the rivers'.¹³ *Sindhu-mātā* is a *Bahuvrīhi* compound as it accentuates its first member, it is therefore to be translated here as 'one who has (celestial) ocean as her mother'. Here in the phrase *Sarasvatī saptaśīḥ sindhumnātā* the word *sindhumnātā* clearly indicates that all rivers have the (celestial) ocean as their mothers, because Sarasvatī is said to be *saptaśīḥ*, i. e., 'seventh (in the system) having the celestial ocean as her mother' and therefore, the remaining six of the system are also corresponding to her. Thus the word *sindhu-mātā* indicates that a river derives its water from the heavenly store-house of water.¹⁴

1. 5, 3. 2. 10, 64, 9.
3. They are Gaṅgā, Sutudrī, Paruṣī, Asiknī and Arjikiyā.
4. They are: Marudvīdhā (a tributary of Asiknī), Vitasā and Suṣomā (the two tributaries of Arjikiyā).
5. 5, 42, 12. 6. Vibhava means lit. the 'eminent', 'artist' from 'vib' and the root 'bha'—VM, p. 133.
7. Venkaiamādhava's rendering of '*Vibhavaśaśāḥ*' as *mahatīmāpī tamkartṛyaḥ*, 'making (i. e. turning) even the big ones as tiny ones' is not convincing since it stands contrary to the nature of the rivers who are usually linked with the idea of increasing and developing, not that of decreasing and diminishing because they, as a part of their nature, bestow fecundity and fertility.
8. 6, 61, 13. Here dative seems to be standing for instrumental. Sayana's rendering '*vibhūdyā kṛtā Prajāpatinā*' is not very apt, though it retains the sense that Prajapati carved it; but he does not translate *Vibhava* as Prajapati, he supplies *Prajāpatinā* instrumental for the p.p. *kṛtā*. But we refer here to a passage of Ait. Br. (4, 33, 9) where Vibhava is said as an artífier of Varuṇa. Hence Sarasvatī was fashioned by Vibhava (an aspect of Prajapati); this is the most probable meaning of the passage.
9. 7, 96, 1. 10. 7, 95, 2. 11. 2, 41, 16. 12. 7, 36, 6.

13. See Sayana: *Gaṅgādīnāḥ madhye sindhumnātā apām mātṛ bhātā Sarasvatīḥ* Venkaiamādhava: *Sindhunāḥ mātā*; Macdonnell, VM, p. 86, 'a mother of streams'. This compound in dual form (i. e., *Sindhumnātāḥ*) is an attribute of the Aśvins in I, 46, 2 where Sayana rightly takes it as a *Bahuvrīhi* compound and renders it as *samudā-matīkan* 'they who have the ocean as their mothers', and *samudrajan*, 'born of ocean'. This compound in plural form (i. e. *Sindhu-mātāḥ*) again occurs as an attribute of the Maruts in I, 76, 6. There again Sayana commits a mistake by taking it as *Taiṭtiriya* and thus renders it as *Sindhu-nirmātāḥ*, 'makers of rivers'. But the correct and natural meaning of this *Bahuvrīhi* compound (as it accentuates its first member) is 'they who have the (celestial) ocean as their mother'. This meaning is natural in the sense that the Maruts being atmospheric deities (Nigh. 5, 5), who are assigned the functions of thunder, rain, etc., are said here as rising from the celestial ocean, the store-house of *dharma* (vapour), *jyoti* (light) and *salila* (water), etc. Celestial ocean has been referred to many a time by the word *sindhu*. On this count earlier Western Vedic scholars mistook that the R̥gvedic Aryans were not acquainted to the ocean. But Dr. A. C. Das in his celebrated work—'R̥gvedic India' has put forth ample information from the R̥V to refute their view.
14. May it be due to the reason of attaching sanctity to the river that it is said as deriving water from heaven or may it be due to the fact that the river of the R̥gvedic period had been receiving water more from rains than from glaciers because of climatic condition, as we have observed above. This fact is also hinted at by the appellation of the river Marud-vīdhā, 'nurtured by the Maruts' (10, 75, 5) which suggests that the river derived its waters from rains. Furthermore, the Maruts (gods mainly connected with the phenomena of thunder and rain) are referred to as causing streams of mountains to pour 5, 59, 7.

Sarasvatī and Apah (waters)
Apah (waters) are the terrestrial goddesses¹ who are lauded in separate hymns² and detached *ṛcs* mostly occurring in the Viśvedevāḥ prayers in the R̥V. Sarasvatī has been prayed along with them in two significant references; once in a *ṛc* of the hymn sung in their laudation and again in a prayer to the Viśvedevāḥ. In both references Sarasvatī looks as if were a constituent of the Apah, and it should be counted as such, for, she is a terrestrial river-goddess. In the *ṛc* belonging to the former class (i. e., of the Apah-hymn), by the side of Apah, who are said to be wealthy and protectresses of independent riches, controlling treasures, and upholding auspicious actions and *amṛta*, Sarasvatī is prayed to give a long life to the singer³. This prayer to Sarasvatī is popular with the worshipper of the Apah⁴. Such a prayer to Sarasvatī by the side of the Apah points out that waters of the river-goddess Sarasvatī, too, are remedial by

which they lengthen the span of life of the worshipper. In the *ṛc* belonging to Viśvedevāḥ Sarasvatī, Sarayu and Sindhu seem to have been indentified with the goddesses Āpaḥ and are addressed as mothers and requested to give milk rich in fatness and honey⁵. The epithet *ambitamā*, 'best of mothers' and the vocative *amha*, 'O mother' used for Sarasvatī also indicate her relations with the Āpaḥ who are often mentioned as mothers⁶.

1. Nigh. 5, 3; but Macdonell, VM, p. 85 discusses them amongst atmospheric gods.
2. Four hymns (7, 47; 49; 10, 9; 30) belong to them,
3. 10, 30, 12.
4. VM, p. 85 'They (Āpaḥ) are remedial, bestowing remedies and long life, immortality.....'.
5. 10, 64, 9. 6. 10, 91, 6; 10, 9, 2, 10, 17, 10; 1, 23, 16; 6, 50, 7.

Sarasvatī and Parjanya

Parjanya is a god of the rain-cloud, regarded as the type of liberal beneficence. In 8, 21, 18 it is said that king Citra and many other kinglings follow Sarasvatī, the exemplar of munificence (as is mentioned in 8, 21, 17) but it is king Citra, who like Parjanya with his rain, has spread himself with myriad gifts. Thus in this *ṛc* the bounteous characteristic of both Sarasvatī and Parjanya is mentioned which is followed so laudably by King Citra and ordinarily by many kinglings.

Sarasvatī and the Pitṛs

In a prayer¹ the goddess Sarasvatī has been reminded by the worshipper that she visited the sacrifice, sitting in a car along with the Pitṛs and rejoicing in their oblation (aforetime)²; (therefore, at present also) seated on this sacred grass (strewn by the side of the altar) she may be joyful and give the worshippers strengthening food which is devoid of disease. The worship of the Pitṛs had been popular in all the Aryan clans. Their deification is considered to be the most ancient in the Aryan pantheon of gods. Schrader³ thinks that 'the worship of ancestors' was at the root of development of the concept of divine beings in the Indo-European culture. The reference to the Pitṛs in the present *ṛc* also suggests the antiquity of their worship. The association of Sarasvatī, who is relatively speaking a recent goddess, with the celebrated Pitṛs seems to be a concentrated effort on the part of the seer to attach eminence to the new entrant into the pantheon.

1. 10, 17, 8.

2. The purport of the preceding *ṛc* (10, 17, 7) also suggests that Sarasvatī had been worshipped by the people of the past, she blessed them and, therefore, the devotees of the deities (today) call her (regularly) at the time of spreading sacrifice.
3. Aryan Religion, ERE, II, 14-57.

Sarasvatī and the Viśvedevāḥ

Sarasvatī has been lauded in three separate hymns¹ and a number of detached *ṛcs* mostly occurring in the Viśvedevāḥ prayers. But the Viśvedevāḥ, as divinity of that name, have been mentioned only once² in conjunction with Sarasvatī. Viśvedevāḥ, Sarasvatī and others have been requested in this prayer to pay heed to the words (i.e., solicitation) of their worshipper.

1. 6, 61; 7, 95; 96.
2. 10, 65, 13.

Sarasvatī and Soma

There is, perhaps, no reference in the R̥V in which Sarasvatī and Soma are praised or prayed together. Of course, in two *ṛcs*¹ connection of the goddess with Soma is referred to indirectly. In the former, Sarasvatī, as a member of Tisro-deviḥ (the other two being Bhārati and Ilā), is requested to visit the sacrifice belonging to Pavamāna (i.e., Soma). Two *phala-mantras*,* viz., 31 and 32, which occur at the end of the *sūkta* 9, 67 refer to the merits which are gained by studying hymns pertaining to Pavamāna (Soma). In the first *mantra* the favour of Mātariśvan for a student of *Pavamānī* hymns is mentioned and in the next Sarasvatī is said as drawing forth water, butter, milk and mead for such a student as reads the hymns pertaining to Pavamāna (Soma), which are but an essence (*rasa*-savour of life) piled up (*sambhṛtam*) by the R̥ṣis.

Dr. Surya Kanta in his paper 'Saras, Soma and Sira'² says *saras* in the word Sarasvatī means Soma and thus establishes a firm closeness between Sarasvatī and Soma.

1. 9, 5, 8; 67, 32.

* *R̥cs* which impress upon the reader the nature of merits which are likely accrued as a result of the devotion and belief.

2. ABORI, Vol. XXXVIII, Part I-II, pp. 115-39.

Sarasvatī and the Minor Female Divinities

Besides Nadyaḥ and Āpaḥ, Sarasvatī has also been associated with such female divinities as are minor in status when viewed in presence of other deities of the pantheon. In a prayer¹

female deities alone are invoked for help (*utaye*) and well-being (*svastaye*). Besides Sarasvatī, others to whom invocation is made here are Gūṅgū, Siniṃvālī, Rākā, Indrāṇī and Varuṇāṇī. With the goddess Siniṃvālī, Sarasvatī has been prayed to protect the embryo in first hemistich of a *īc* while in the second hemistich of the same *īc*, Aśvins have been prayed for a similar gain. Sarasvatī, Bṛhaddevā and Rākā, who are called givers of desiderata (*daśasyanti*) and fair ones (*subrah*), are requested to befriend the worshipper. Gṇāḥ and Sarasvatī, the two female divinities, are requested to associate themselves with (or accept the sacrifice of) the worshipper by the side of other major gods like Indra, Varuṇa, Mitrā, Agnī, Pūṣan, etc. In another prayer⁵ Sarasvatī, who is said as accordant with the Gṇāḥ (*Gṇābhīr.....sajā*), is requested to give the singer unassailable (*durādharām*) and flawless (*acchidam*) refuge. Viśvedevāṇ and Sarasvatī, in conjunction with Dhīs, Puraṃdhī, have been implored to listen to words (or supplicance) of the worshipper⁶.

1. 2, 32, 8. Gūṅgū is Kuhu, 'the new moon personified'—Sāyana. *īc* (ḥ), the pronoun, prefixed here to the first four divinities suggests that they are well-known.
2. 10, 184, 2.
3. 5, 42, 12. Bṛhaddevā is a goddess frequently associated with Iṣa (2, 31, 4) Sarasvatī and others. Sāyana takes it as an epithet meaning 'very brilliant' of Rākā, the goddess who presides over the day of full moon.
4. 5, 46, 2. Gṇāḥ are the wives of gods : *Gṇāḥ devāṇām sītṛyāḥ*—Sāyana. Cf. Tvaṣṭī, accordant with the Gṇāḥ (*Gṇābhīr sājā*) is requested to speed forth the car of the worshipper—2, 31, 4.
5. 6, 49, 7.
6. 10, 65, 13. While *Dhī* may be taken here as the pious thought defined, Puraṃdhī meaning 'artifice', then Puraṃdhī would mean 'deft in artifice', or 'active', 'zealous', etc. Macdonell (VM, p. 36) points out that once the god Pūṣan has been said as 'Puraṃdhī' in 2, 31, 4, Macdonell wrongly thought that since the bounty of Pūṣan is particularly often mentioned, e.g., in 6, 58, 4 and 8, 4, 18 etc., therefore, 'Puraṃdhī', as an epithet, would sit well on Pūṣan. Firstly, we should note that when Pūṣan is referred to as bountiful in the above context he is said as *maghava* (6, 58, 4) or *manthīhah*. Secondly, bounty of many gods, to wit, Indra, Aśvins, Agnī, etc., has been mentioned, therefore, this is not specific to Pūṣan. Thirdly, Puraṃdhī in 2, 31, 4 can also be taken as an appellation of separate deity, may be that of 'Bounty' (i.e. the deified generosity), 'Deftness' or 'Boldness'.

SARASVATĪ and Vibhvan

Sarasvatī is referred to as carved by Vibhvan (*vibhvaṇe kṛtā*). As observed above Vibhvan is a divine artificer more probably an aspect of Prajāpati. Sarasvatī's association with Vibhvan is but to give an idea of her divine origin, inasmuch as she has been said to have been fashioned by a divine artificer.

1. 6, 61, 13. Here dative stands for instrumental. Vibhvan seems to be the Chief of the group of the same name, as we meet in 7, 48, 2—'Vibhvan with the Vibhus is invoked'. In the Ait. Br. (4, 33, 9) it is said that Vibhvan was the artificer of Varuṇa.

SARASVATĪ and Sarasvat

From a very few *īcs* addressed to Sarasvat in the R̥V and comparatively more *īcs* in higher panegyric terms to Sarasvatī, it seems that a counterpart of Sarasvatī was thought of and hence the concept of god Sarasvat might have come into being¹. Sarasvat has been differently interpreted as Vayu, Sūrya and Indra by the scholiasts in different passages². Sarasvat has been classified in the Nighaṇṭu³ amongst the gods of atmospheric region. The act of *rasanuprādāna*, 'shedding rain' is associated with him, though there is no direct or indirect reference which alludes to any of his acts of valiance (*vīra-karma*).

Explaining the epithet *vīra-paṇi* of Sarasvatī, Muir⁴ trying to improve upon the interpretation of *vīra* as 'Prajāpati' by Sāyana suggests that Sarasvat in preference to Prajāpati be taken as *vīra* here. But, perhaps, it did not occur to the mind of the learned scholar that nowhere in the R̥V has Sarasvat ever been associated with any act of valiance. He as such has no ground to be called *vīra*, 'valiant'.

The fecundating power of Sarasvat is referred to when he is said as the lovely germ (*garbham upādakam*, Sāyana) of waters and that of plants. He delights the worshipper with rain⁵. The billows of Sarasvat (i.e. the raining waters he sheds) are said to be replete with honey and dropping ghee with which he is requested to be the protector of worshippers⁶.

The fertility and nourishing nature of waters are often spoken of in the terms like *ghṛta*, *maddu*, *kṣīra*, etc. in the R̥V⁷. In 7, 96, 5 *ghṛtaś-cūṭah* suggests that Sarasvat sheds water from above. This idea is in perfect apposition to one contained in *in vītibhīḥ taryantam*⁸. Thus Sarasvat like other atmospheric

deities is conceived as a god shedding rain. On this count one may take the swelling breast of Sarasvat (*pīpivāmsam Sarasvataḥ stanam*) as the cloud, which is fully beautiful to look at. He is thus an atmospheric god, thought riverine in nature like Sarasvatī in the R.V.

Sarasvatī has been conceived as a river-goddess by the side of her conception as a goddess of atmospheric region. Similarly, Sarasvat, it seems, has also been conceived as a river-god. He is said to be friendly to men (*naryah*), a potent (male) child amongst women (*yoṣaṇāsu vṛṣā śiśuḥ*). The latter attribute suggests that he is a deified mighty (i. e., swift-moving) rivulet amongst the deified streams and hence styled as *vṛsabho yajñiyāsu*, 'foremost amongst the holy women (i. e., the holy rivers)'⁹.

Thus we have seen that Sarasvat is met with in the R.V. in two aspects—(i) as a deity of atmospheric region causing rain to fall and (ii) as a terrestrial rivergod¹⁰.

Some of the functions of Sarasvat and prayers addressed to him correspond to those of Sarasvatī. For example, with his billows Sarasvat is requested to be protector (*avitā*) of the worshipper¹¹ where as the river-goddess Sarasvatī is said as protectress (*avitrī*)¹² in the same hymn. Sarasvat is associated with *Dhīs*, the deified thoughts or prayers or artifices¹³ like Sarasvatī¹⁴. Sarasvat is prayed like other Vedic gods including Sarasvatī to bestow progeny and food¹⁵, he is invoked for help by the worshipper¹⁶ like Sarasvatī and Indra¹⁷. The nearness between Sarasvatī and Sarasvat led a commentator to observe that the eulogy of Sarasvat contained in 7, 95, 3 is but to propitiate Sarasvatī¹⁸. Unlike Sarasvatī Sarasvat is called '*divya-suparna*', the term applied to the Sun-bird and Viṣṇu's vehicle Garuda¹⁹.

He gives a *vājin*²⁰ to worshippers, for gain (*sātaye*) he decorates the body²¹. An interesting but distinct characteristic of Sarasvat is that he is approached by bachelors who long for wives and by the liberal ones who yearn for male issues²². It is difficult to say how the worship of Sarasvat would have become popular amongst the folk of unmarried men yearning for consorts. However, one may surmise that Sarasvat—a hilly rivulet swelled with waters would have been witnessed by people as joining with its own efforts the river Sarasvatī, thought to be its consort. People therefore, took in Sarasvat a quality of

finding his consort soon and at the same time independently. Thus he would have come to be worshipped by the people pining for finding consorts soon and without being dependent on others.

1. Yāska (Nir. 10, 24) does not explain the word *Sarasvat* but gives a note: '*Sarasoān vyākhyātāḥ*, 'Sārasvān has been explained'. This note of Yāska suggests that he would have derived *Sarasvat* also like *Sarasvatī* from *saras* adding *matup* suffix. Without giving any explanation Yāska quotes one of the three *mantras* of Vasiṣṭha (7, 96, 4-6). Śaunaka giving an etymology of *Sarasvat* says: '*Sarāmsi ghyatavanyasya santi lokeṣu yat triṣu|Sarasvantam iti prāha.....|* —Br. Dev. 2, 51, 'Because he has pools replete with ghee in all the three regions, therefore, they (i. e. Ṛṣis like Vasiṣṭha) call him *Saravān*.....That is, Śaunaka takes *saras* meaning 'pool' in the word *Sarāvat* while Yāska in *Sarasvatī* (corresponding feminine of *Sarasvat*) takes *saras* meaning 'water'.
2. See Sāyaṇa's comm. 1, 164, 52: '*Sarasvat is Sūrya*'; 7, 95, 3: '*Madhyamasthāno Vāyuḥ Sarasvān*'; AV 7, 40, 1, (=RV 1, 164, 52): '*Indra iti viniyogād avogamyate*'.
3. 5, 4. 4. OST., Vol. V, 3rd Ed. Amsterdam, 1967, p. 340, note 508.
5. 1, 164, 52. 6. 7, 96, 5. 7. See e.g., 9, 67, 32; 10, 64, 9; etc.
8. 1, 164, 52. 9. 7, 95, 3.
10. K. C. Chattopadhyaya (Rgvedic River Sarasvatī, Jour. of the Dept. of Letters, Vol. XV, Calcutta, pp. 18-19 and 42-43) in order to prove that the *Sarasvatī* is absolutely a terrestrial river, i. e., the Indus (of course he does not anywhere in his paper either acknowledge or refer to her divine analogue, aerial and terrestrial, probably it did not strike him at all), insists on taking *Sarasvat* too, as a terrestrial god. He refutes the statement of the Nighaṇṭu that *Sarasvatī* is a god of middle region and disagrees with Sāyaṇa who supports the Nighaṇṭu. According to the opinion of Chattopadhyaya *Sarasvatī* represents the lower part of the river *Sarasvatī* (=Indus) after the *Kubhā* (with *Suvastu*), the *Krumu* and other tributaries of the Indus had joined her. In support of his argument that the same stream is called by masculine and feminine terms in different regions, he cites the custom still prevailing in the Panjab calling the two main branches of the *Chandrabhāghā* river at its head by '*Candrā*' and '*Bhāghā*', and refers to *Tuṅgā* and *Bhadrā*, the two main branches of the *Tuṅgabhadrā* river and to *Maru* and *Wardvān* of the Rgvedic *Marudvṛdhā*. (Such an idea has also been expressed by Sir M. A. Stein, 'River Names in the Rgveda', Bhandarkar Comm. Vol. p. 24). In his over-enthusiasm to prove his new theory, he seems to have overlooked that, in the present instance, there are no two main streams of the Indus called *Sarasvat* and *Sarasvatī* which later join together to form a single stream as the analogies of *Candrabhāghā*, *Tuṅgabhadrā* and *Marudvṛdhā* would lead one to expect. This

- opinion that the narrow river earstwhile called Sarasvatī was styled as Sarasvat after it had been swollen by the tributaries, has no supporting evidence whatsoever. Further, his argument against the godhead of Sarasvatī is against the unequivocal evidence of RV 1, 164, 52 which he himself appears to admit, p. 18, note 1. He states that the RV (10, 66, 5) does not refer to Sarasvat as a mid-air deity. But the very fact, he has been invoked in conjunction with the great celestial gods, such as Varuṇa, Viṣṇu and others, proves that he, too, is a celestial god. Chatopadhyaya fears "if Sarasvatī is classed with Vāyu and other gods of the middle region, Sarasvatī too is so called." Strange logic indeed. "As Sarasvatī in 7, 95 and 7, 96", he continues, "is a river and not a Madhyama-sthānā devatā Sarasvat too of the same hymns should not belong to the middle region", pp. 18-19. But it seems clearly that 7, 95, 6 alludes to the celestial character of Sarasvatī. Besides, in both these hymns (7, 95 and 96) she is invoked for opulence and food and is offered oblations. This shows that the R̥t̥i in these hymns describes a divine Sarasvatī rather than an earthly one. Thus we may not discard the Nāigbhāṇuka view that Sarasvatī is an atmospheric deity. Even when he seems to be a river, he carries divine character and is thus to be taken as a terrestrial river-god also.
11. 7, 96, 5. 12. 7, 96, 2. 13. 10, 65, 5. 14. 7, 35, 11; 10, 65, 13. 15. 7, 96, 6. The prayer *bhaktimahi prajñam*, 'may we gain progeny and food' is also made to Soma-9, 8, 9.
16. 1, 164, 52. 17. 6, 52, 6.
18. See Sāyana's comm.
19. 1, 164, 52; VM, p. 39. Sāyana, Saunaka and Sarvānukramanī refer to this *re* as pertaining to god sun. Br. Dev. reads—*Sauri vāṇya Sarasvatī* and Sarvānukramanī reads—*anīya Sarasvatī Sārya va*.
20. 'Sreed', Griffith; 'male issue',—Sāyana; lit. one possessed of food or vigour (*vajra*).
21. Though Sarasvat being conceived as a deity of atmospheric region can be well thought of as extending succour in battle, as Griffith takes, but here the root *san*, 'to gain', 'to secure (for one self or for another)' in *sārya*, is mostly used in connection with those concepts or entities which are essential for the continuation of human life on earth. See, e. g., Indra is stated to have secured the sun, the divine water, the earth, the sky, the steeds, the cow and gold (3, 34, 8; 9); Soma wins the sun (9, 76, 2), water, dawn, sun, the cows (9, 90, 4; 74, 1); man's life may be the object (10, 97, 5). Thus *sati*, 'gain', is a wider term and may not be shrunken to convey merely the meaning of 'success in battle'. 22. 7, 96, 4.
- * **Sarasvatī and Other Two Members of the Triad of Goddesses**
- Sarasvatī is a member of the Vedic triad of goddesses and she is invoked with Iā and Bhārati, the other two members of the
- * **Re pertaining to the Triad of Goddesses which have some bearing on the person of Sarasvatī only have been taken up here for study.**

triad, to be seated on the sacred grass strewn by the side of altar in sacrifice⁷. In another prayer they are requested to protect the sacred grass (i. e., *yajña*), lawlessly, of the worshipper and here out of three goddesses Sarasvatī's function of perfecting *dhi* alone is mentioned⁸. All the three are invoked by name by the worshipper and are requested to inspire for (the attainment of) glory⁹. All the three goddesses have been said as *svapasaḥ*, 'good artificers' or 'much agile', *yajñīyāḥ*, 'worthy to be offered sacrifice'⁵, *mayobhuvāḥ*, 'who bring delight' and *asridhāḥ*, 'who do not decay'. Mahi in these *re*s is sometimes applied as an epithet of Sarasvatī, sometimes Mahi appears as the third member of the triad, the other two being Sarasvatī and Iā⁸.

At one place⁶ Agni is equated with each goddess of the triad. All the three goddesses are conceived as being associated with gods, probably, subordinate to them, and are requested to be seated on the sacred grass along with those subordinate deities¹⁰.

*Viśvānritī*¹¹, 'pervading everywhere' and '*Hotra Bhārati*'¹², a sacrificial entity of the Bharatas, mentioned along with the Tisro-devī¹³, seem to be forms of Agni i. e., Sacrificial Fire. Hence the other members of the triad may also be taken as Agni. The fire first kindled in the region of Sarasvatī was called by that name. Bhārati is thus the Fire of the Bharatas, a renowned clan of the ancient sacrifice-loving Aryans, who afterwards became so advanced and powerful as to give their name to the whole country which has since been called Bhārata-varṣa. A third name of Agni is Iā, derived from the region in which the great Manu performed his penance and sacrifices, and which, accordingly, came to be regarded as his spiritual preceptor¹⁴. Iā has been described as the daughter of Dakṣa, one of the creators in the Vedic pantheon, and identified with a region which was one of the best regions known to the ancient Aryans¹⁴. It would thus appear that these three goddesses were sacrificial Fires which were called after the names of the regions in which they had first been kindled. Since they have invariably been mentioned together in the RV, it seems that Iā, Bhārati and Sarasvatī must have been contiguous regions. In 3, 23, 4 the sacrificial fire Iā is invoked to burn auspiciously in homes of Aryans living on banks of the Sarasvatī, the Dīśadvatī and the Apaya, and to bring as much prosperity to them as to the Aryans living in Iā. We may thus need not labour much to identify

them with *Vāks* of different regions. Speaking on rational grounds, they are sacrificial Fires that are terrestrial in every respect¹⁵. It has been suggested that Sarasvatī, Ilā and Bhārati constitute a triad which is a prototype of later Hindu triad of Sarasvatī, Durgā and Lakṣmī, because in later literature, Idā (=Ilā) is an epithet of Durgā, and Lakṣmī, too, can be identified with the Vedic Bhārati, (Bhārati being the wife of Bharata Āditya *Bharataḥ Ādityaḥ/Tasya bhāḥ*, Nir. 8, 13, and Viṣṇu being the Āditya par excellence¹⁶). But this suggestion does not seem to be a sound one. From the study of the development of the concept of Lakṣmī it seems that she has her own historical background¹⁷. Secondly, if Idā (Ilā) is a name of Durgā, it cannot help to identify the former with the latter because Durgā when conceived as mother-goddess came to be identified with a number of divinities¹⁸. Besides, Durgā also has a background separate from Idā (Ilā) since Rgvedic times. Thirdly, Sarasvatī and Bhārati in later literature are synonymous and not Lakṣmī and Bhārati. Therefore, we may say here at the most that out of the Vedic triad (of Sarasvatī, Ilā and Bhārati) Sarasvatī with a dominating personality amalgamated with her the close-knit person of the goddess Bhārati¹⁹. Beside that other members of this ancient triad could not evolve myths around their persons, Sarasvatī could do the same and thus gained popularity in post-Vedic literature also²⁰. But on second thoughts, we must say that it is not Sarasvatī, a member of the Tisro-Devī (i.e., Sarasvatī, the sacrificial Fire) who had a conceptual development afterwards, it was undoubtedly Vedic Sarasvatī with a riverine character who went through a phased development of her person. Thus the personality of Sarasvatī, the sacrificial Fire, became extinct like that of Ilā and Bhārati—the two other sacrificial Fires with the withering away of Vedic ritualism²¹.

1. 10, 110, 8; 1, 13, 9; 1, 142, 9. 2. 2, 3, 8. 3. 1, 188, 8.
4. 10, 110, 8. 5. 1, 142, 9. 6. 1, 13, 9 (=5, 5, 8) 7. See, e. g., 1, 142, 9. 8. See, e. g., 1, 13, 9. 9. 2, 1, 11.
10. 3, 4, 8=7, 2, 8. Cf. Venkṭamādhava's comm. who says : *Bhārati Bhāratiḥ svānucaribhiḥ sahitaḥ...Sarasvatī ca svānucarair devaṅaṇiḥ... ā...sidantu*. Sāyaṇa adds that the deities related to Bhārati are the goddesses related to Sūrya and the Sārasvatas here are the gods related to the atmospheric region. The Tisro-devī are classified amongst the terrestrial deities in the Nighaṇṭu (6, 2); two members

of the traid Ilā and Sarasvatī individually are placed in the atmospheric region (5, 5). Bhārati the third member is a mere synonym of Vāk and not included in the list of deities. When Tisro-devī were allocated to three regions individually by the scholiasts, Sarasvatī was thought of in the atmospheric region, while Bhārati in the celestial region and Ilā in the terrestrial region. Br. Dev., 3, 13. Yāska (8, 13) explaining Bhārati as 'lustre of Ādityā' *Bharataḥ Ādityaḥ/Tasya bhāḥ*—hints at the celestial abode of Bhārati. Explaining 2, 1, 11 Sāyaṇa again associates Bhārati with celestial region, Sarasvatī with atmospheric and Ilā with terrestrial region.

11. 2, 3, 8. 12. 1, 142, 9. Sāyaṇa : Bhārati is a celestial Vāk. Also Cf. Br. Dev. 3, 12—14. 13. 1, 31, 11. 14. 3, 23, 4.
15. We do not intend here to go into detailed discussion of their identification or their emergence as sacrificial goddesses. For different views of modern scholars refer to SBE Vol. XLVI, Part-II p. 11, 12 and 156.
16. Dr. P. L. Bhargava, India in the Vedic Age, Upper India Publishing House, Lucknow, 1956, p. 177.
17. See Govind Chandra, Rai : *Prācina Bhārata meṁ Lakṣmī Pratimā*, passim. 18. See *Durgāsaptasatī* passim.
19. In some passages where all goddesses are prayed to, it is seen that Sarasvatī is only conspicuous by her presence while the other two are missing; cf. 2, 32, 8; 5, 42, 12.
20. Popularity of gods depends on 'the extent of mythology, they inspire': Renou, *Religions of India*, University of London, 1953, p. 22.
21. Vedic sacrifices continued to be performed but they were not Vedic in character because they did not conform to the canons of Vedic ritualism.

Sarasvatī and Vāk*

The identification of Sarasvatī with Vāk was effected in later Vedic literature, but scholiasts, as we have seen above, erroneously identify her with Vāk even in the RV. When we study characteristics of both Vāk and Sarasvatī in the RV, we observe that there is no such characteristic as is common to both or which is exclusively borne by them. For example, water is the generative force which both these goddesses possess¹. But almost all atmospheric deities are associated with the act of shedding rain. The other main characteristic of the atmospheric deity *balakṛti*, 'act of valiance' is also possessed by both of them². But the character of each Vedic god is combined with

* I have dealt with their relationship in detail in my paper-Vāk a deity in the Rgveda, submitted at the XXIII session of AIOC, Aligarh, 1969.

a number of such features as are common to many other gods. Thus this commonness cannot lead us to identify them with each other.

Besides, the personality of Vak in the RV essentially stands distinct from Sarasvati. The goddess Vak is seen in two forms in the RV. Firstly, Vak is Speech originated by the side of the sacrifice by sagacious seers. In the form of *mantras*, she was delivered to them by Bṛhaspati¹. The younger Ṛṣis performed penance to have a close look on her person when they found her as abiding with elder Ṛṣis². This Vak is the Holy Order, the Knowledge personified³, whose abode is the person of a peerless seer⁴. Vak is the first of all creations of Holy Order⁵. Secondly, Vak is the atmospheric Speech. Attached firmly to the gods Indra and the Maruts, she roams about in seclusion⁶. Vak, the Queen of gods, gladdens the worshipper by shedding rain for their welfare like a milch cow when attended upon¹⁰. Gods generated Vak, probably when conversing secretly with one another. In other words whispering of the gods in heaven, which is not comprehended by man of this mundane sphere, is what is styled as Vak, the atmosphere Speech, Thunder. The voice of Heaven is the source of speech of all types of animals¹¹.

Vak is first of those who merit worship. Gods have established her in many places. Approached by them for shelter, she provides homes to enter in¹². All actions such as feeding, breathing, speaking and hearing are stimulated by Vak. They dwindle who do not cognise her. She only declaims the truth. She, verily, speaks of that abode whom gods and men desire alike. She makes a man mighty, and a Brāhmaṇa a Ṛṣi, an intellectual whom she loves¹³. She is the creator of the sky. Her abode is in waters, in the ocean¹⁴ and thence she extends over all creatures and touches even heaven with her tall stature. Whenever she creates all worlds, she alone wanders like the wind. In her grandeur she has surpassed Heaven and Earth¹⁵.

Thus nowhere in the RV do we find any occasion to identify Sarasvati with Vak. Even in I, 164, 49 there is no ground to take Sarasvati as standing for Vak. The *it* is essentially a prayer to the goddess Sarasvati to bestow on worshippers her breast that is exhaustless (*safayāh*) spring of pleasure with which

she feeds all best things, which is the giver of wealth, funder of Vasus, and rich-giver (*su-dairah*).

Hence Sarasvati's association with other divinities indirectly alludes to the fact that most of the major divinities as well as minor ones have grown on the banks of the river, which thus appears to have been an active witness of the evolution and growth of divinities through the medium of sacrifice.

1. For Vak's characteristics of *rasānupradāna*, 'shedding rain', refer to 8, 100, 10. About Sarasvati we have discussed above vide supra p. 9f.
2. Vak bends the bow for Rudra so that his arrow may strike and slay detractor, the hater of devotion. She fights in the cause of (worshipful) people (10, 125, 6).
3. See VM. p. 15, 4, 10, 71, 1, 5, 10, 71, 3, 8, 100, 9.
6. This form of Vak is explained in some detail in 10, 71.
- 7, 1, 164, 35, 8, Ibid., 37, 9, 1, 167, 1, 10-8, 100, 10.
11. Ibid., 11; the word *pasu* here includes the man also who is chief among the bipeds SBr. 6, 2, 1, 18, 7, 5, 2, 6.
12. Cf. 10, 125, 3.
- 13, 10, 125, 5, 14, Ibid., 7, 15, Ibid., 8.
16. Cf. Dr. K. R. Poidar, *Apri Hymns in the RV*, Journ. of Bombay Univ. Vol. XIV, 1945, p. 242.

Epithets, Attributes and a few functions * of Sarasvati

Epithets and attributes help much to bring about the characteristic features of a deity. There is a good number of epithets and attributes of Sarasvati in the RV which throw ample light on the Vedic concept of the goddess¹. No Vedic deity has been represented as independent of the other members of the pantheon. Their closeness towards one another results in attributes peculiar to one god attaching themselves to others. Sarasvati, too, bears a few attributes of such type, i. e., those which are characteristically borne by other gods.

We have seen above the various aspects of the goddess and discussed a good number of her epithets etc. Avoiding repetition, we shall discuss below the remaining epithets, etc., of the goddess or cast some fresh light on those already discussed. Without any classification, they are being discussed in the order of *mandala*, *sukta* and *mantra* :

* A few functions which are close in their nature and extent to the attributes of the goddess have been included here in this discussion.

Pāvakā 'one who purifies' (1, 3, 10), discussed above. Sarasvatī, the river-goddess, purifies her worshipper from within and without².

Vājebhir vājīvatī and Vājeṣu vājin, 'possessed of vigour on account of food' 'rich in food or abundant in steeds' and 'possessed of vigour or army in battles' (1,3,10; 2,41,18;6,61, 3;4; 7,96,3; 6, 61, 6). The epithet *Vājīvatī* is often borne by Uṣas³, though it is also borne by another river-goddess and at least once by the Aśvins⁴. In word *vājīvatī*, we get the usage of two possessive suffixes—*in<ini and matup>vat*. They make the formation of the word rather curious.. Hence Skandāsvāmī explaining the word says : *Vājah* (Nigh. 2, 7) *ity anna nāma vājīnī śabdopī tasyaiva paryāyānatram draṣṭavyam* [.....annair annavatī] (*anna* is *havir-lakṣṇādi*) Yāska also explains the word as *annavatī* (Nir. 12, 6). Skandāsvāmī, apparently to avoid the monotonous a repetition of the idea contained in the words *vājebhir vājīvatī* (1, 3, 10), suggests : *yuktam* should be understood after *vājebhir*, for, it is suggested by the instrumental form of the word, (and thus may not be connected with *vājīvatī*) and then *vājīvatī* may be explained as either 'possessing an army'⁵ or 'possessing the paraphernalia of sacrifice'⁶. Texts of the *mantras* mentioning the river-goddess suggest, that we may not take *vāja* in *vājīvatī* for 'battle' or 'contest'. For, we see that other divinities⁸ also, interested like Sarasvatī in man's welfare, are very often invoked to confer their favours, consisting in *vāja* which is often attended by such much-desired entities as wealth, possessions, refreshing drinks, plenty of food, sons, cattle, welfare. Sarasvatī herself is requested to promote and give *vāja-s* to the worshipper : *Vardha śubhre stuvate rāsi vājan*.....⁹ The combined sense of the attribute *vājebhir vājīvatī* seems to be corresponding to : *kṣayan vājaiḥ*, 'ruling over, or a master of *vāja-s*', said about Agni¹⁰ and *vājanām patih*, 'lord of *vāja-s*', said about Soma¹¹ and Pūṣan¹², and *Vājanam vrdhah*, 'promoter of *vāja-s*', said about Pūṣan,¹³

Here we do not rule out that the sense of *bala*, 'power', is not signified by the word *vāja*, and thought it may not be present in the word *vājīvatī* as Skandāsvāmī takes, yet when Sarasvatī is addressed *Vājeṣu vājīni* and asked to bestow booty (*saṇi*)¹⁴, we may unmistakably take the goddess as possessed of *bala*, 'vigour' or *senā*, 'army'. That is, we may say that *vājebhir vājīvatī* and *vājīvatī* convey that the goddess is rich in *vāja*

i. e., she possesses in abundance the power manifesting in vegetative life, food, strength, potency, vigour, etc., and *vājeṣu vājīni* suggests that she is possessed of vigour or army in battles.

But if we take *vājin* denoting steed^{15(a)}, *vājīvatī* would mean 'possessed of steeds', that is, land watered by the Sarasvatī was considered rich in steeds. This view finds force from the fact that the Sarasvatī was a haunt of warriors of rank. They might have found best species of quality steeds on the banks of Sarasvatī, therefore, they styled Sarasvatī *vājīvatī*, 'possessed of *vājins*'.

Dhiyāvasu, 'rich in devotion' (1, 3, 10). *Dhī* according to Nigh. is 'action' (2, 1) and 'wisdom' (3, 9). It denotes *karma* in its wider sense¹⁶. *Dhī* in the R̥gvedic passages may mean *śilpi-karma*, 'artifice', *stuti-karma* 'eulogy' or *yajña-karma* 'sacrifice'. Yāska's rendering of the word *dhiyāvasu* as *karmavasū* is too general to be understood in right perspective, because 'karma' itself is quite a wide term and supplying *karma* as synonym for *dhī* is insufficient for conveying the underlying sense of the word. Sāyaṇa has explained the word differently in various contexts¹⁸, which does not in any way, differ from that of Yāska. Skandāsvāmī interprets the word as follows : *Prajñā-dhanā athavā vaser ācchādanārthasya vasuśabdah* [*Prajñāyāss-cchādayitrī sarvārthāṇām*, i. e., rich because of her intellect or *vasu*, may be derived from the root *vas*, 'to cover' (then it would mean) 'one who covers all the meanings by her intellect'. Venkaṭamādhava explains it as *prajñayā sarveṣām vāsayitrī* which corresponds to the sense conveyed by the second meaning of Skandāsvāmī. Dr. Sarup translates the word as 'rich in devotion'¹⁹. We have recorded above various interpretations of different scholiasts to show that they are not very appropriate, for they fail to hit at the correct meaning latent in the word *dhiyāvasu*.

Before we dwell on the meaning of the word which is nearest to its correct sense, we shall point out here that *dhiyāvasu* is not an exclusive epithet of the goddess Sarasvatī. Agni, Indra, and Soma are also styled as *dhiyāvasu*; however, Agni amongst them bears this epithet very often. It will not be incorrect, if we say that it is an epithet which is more or less specific to Agni because the refrain—*prātar makṣu dhiyāvasur jagamyāt* occurs in several prayers to Agni²⁰. This refrain of the eulogies of Agni is also applied in prayers to Indra add Soma²¹. Sāyaṇa interprets this prayer as follows : *prātaḥ makṣu śighram karmāṇā*

budhyā vā prapādhānosniḥ jagamyāt āgacchāt, 'Agni, who has secured wealth because of his actions or intellect may come soon in the morning'. The rendering of Sayana of the epithet *dhyā-vasu* does not fit well into the context. Though his interpretation speaks of the magnanimity of the god yet it does not dwell on the underlying belief or devotion of the worshipper contained therein. *Dhyāvasu* in the context should be interpreted as *dhyā* (*asmatkāṁ*) *stutikarmāṇā* *vasu* *yasya pāṭve bhavāt, ānimāṇam vasmāntam manyate*, i. e., 'who because of our eulogy possesses wealth or in other words who thinks himself as wealthy because of our eulogy. This idea, indeed, is at the bottom in the prayer and *dhyāvasu* thus conveys the sense that the god prizes our *stuti* 'devotional song' (addressed to him) as his riches, that is, responds or rewards us for the eulogies made to him. (This idea is quite popular in the Rgvedic prayers). Again when it is said about Agni: *devbhīr āgnir īśīto dhyāvasuḥ*²², we would see that the characteristic of the god being compassionate in the context will be made manifest only if we translate *dhyāvasu* as 'one who is (or feels himself) rich because of our eulogy (made to him) or because of his eulogy (made by us)'.

Now in the case of Sarasvatī also we shall translate *dhyāvasu* as above, because our interpretation of the word contains an appeal to the compassion of the deity, which fits in very well with *yajñam vasū*, 'may she accept our sacrifice; who? one that prizes our *stuti* 'devotional song', as her wealth (*dhyāvasu*) that is one who has due regard to our eulogies made to her for acquiring various boons and benefits.

Codayitṛi-suntānam, 'impeller of truthful speech' (1, 3, 11). We have already observed²³ that since the river-goddess Sarasvatī provided protection to Aryan tribes and helped them carry out their rituals uninterrupted by the revilers of gods at home and aliens abroad, she was conceived as the real impeller of the *suntā*-s, the pleasant and truthful speech, the Vedic prayers, etc. We do not see that the sense of *suntā* here is different from what is conveyed by *dhi*. This act of impelling speech is characteristic to other Vedic gods also²⁴. *Suntā* here may also be taken as standing in contrast to *antā*, 'falsehood'. In fact, Vedic gods in general are said to be the furtherers of truth²⁵. If Sarasvatī is the impeller of pleasant and truthful speech, *Uśas* is *suntitavāt*, 'possessed of pleasant and truthful speech'²⁶. Soma

promotes truth and destroys falsehood²⁷. Thus this epithet does not show any exclusive characteristic of Sarasvatī and may not be thus pressed into service to prove her a *jñāna-devatā*, 'the goddess of learning or knowledge'.

Cetanī sumatinām, 'inspiter of noble thoughts' (1, 3, 11).

Though Sayana and Skandavām translate *sumati* here as *anusīhāt* and *yajamāna*, i. e., sacrificer but in the context of the preceding attribute of Sarasvatī it would be more appropriate to translate *sumati* here as *sobhantā* or *subhā-matī*, i. e., 'noble thought'. Like the one discussed above, this attribute also of Sarasvatī does not make her a goddess of knowledge or learning. In addition to it, the prayer that follows these two attributes clearly points out that Sarasvatī is requested here to protect the sacrifice, therefore, *suntā* and *sumati* should be translated preferably in the context of *yajña*, i. e., both *suntā* and *sumati* broadly speaking stand for 'speech', 'the Vedic mantras' which Soma and other gods, as we have seen above, are said to incite among their worshippers.

Subhagā, 'beautiful, fortunate' (1, 89, 3). It is an epithet which has been applied to Sarasvatī several times²⁸. It is also applied to river-goddess Vipā³⁰ and to another river-goddess³¹. It is perhaps the most ancient and general epithet of a Vedic deity, because on the basis of corresponding Slavonic 'bogū' and Persian 'bagha' (for Skt. 'bhaga') which mean a mere 'god', we understand that a correspondence of the Skt. word 'subhagā' would have been a general epithet of a goddess in the Indo-European pantheon.

Sādhayanti dhiyam naḥ, 'perfecting our *dhi*, *stutikarma* or *yajña-karma* (2, 3, 8). Since Sarasvatī is spoken here as one of the *Tisro-devī*, 'the Trio of goddesses' she, in all probability, is Agni and thus *dhi* may preferably be translated here as 'prayer', 'sacrifice' rather than as *buddhi*, 'intellect', as Sayana does.

Mardavatī, 'possessed of the Maruts', 'associate of the Maruts' (2, 30, 8). It has been discussed above.³²

Dhīrati, 'brave', 'inflicting injury' (2, 30, 8). It has been discussed above.³³

Ambitama, 'best of mothers' (2, 41, 16). It has been discussed above³³. This epithet of Sarasvatī corresponds to the *matīrāmā*-an epithet of another river-goddess namely Vipā³⁴. Rivers and

Waters are often mentioned as mothers³⁵ for they bestow on the worshipper a most vital constituent of life, water. It is perhaps for their motherly characteristic that their water and milk of the mother/cow are known by the same name *payas*.

Naditamā, 'best of rivers' (2, 41, 16). It is an exclusive epithet which is applied to Sarasvatī. Sarasvatī has been spoken of in other superlative terms like *priyatamā*, 'most lovely'³⁶, which speaks of the indulgence of the devotee towards his worshippable deity, and *devitamā*, 'best of goddesses'³⁷, which speaks of the rank that Sarasvatī enjoyed amongst the goddesses. The latter is an epithet exclusively borne by Sarasvatī in the whole of Vedic literature. The idea of her being peerless is also suggested by her epithets *uttarā* (i.e. *uttarā sakhibhyaḥ*), 'better than her other companions'³⁸, *nadinām śuciḥ*, 'immaculate amongst streams', *mahinā sindhur anyā*, 'surpassing in majesty all other rivers'⁴⁰, *dyumnebhīr anyā*, 'surpassing others by her glories'⁴¹, *asuryā nadīnām*, 'mighty amongst rivers'⁴², and *apsām apastamā*, 'swiftest amongst the swift ones'⁴³. All these epithets show that the eulogizer has in his mind that Sarasvatī is most puissant amongst rivers. Though the Vedic Ṛṣis are acquainted with a number of rivers including the Sindhu and the Gaṅgā, they speak of the Sarasvatī alone in such high terms as we have seen above.

Rtāvarī, 'possessed of water', 'observer of divine order' (2, 41, 18; 6, 61, 9). *Rta* is a 'divine law', 'eternal law', 'cosmic order', like that of sunrise and sunset and *varī* is a feminine of the suffix '*van*'. This epithet in masculine is applied to Agni (singular number)⁴⁴ and also to the Aśvins (in dual number)⁴⁵. Usually it has been applied to the female divinities like Aditi⁴⁶ (in singular number). *Dyāvā-prthivī*⁴⁷ and *Rodasī*⁴⁸ (in dual number), the Dawns⁴⁹ and the Rivers⁵⁰ (in plural number).

Almost all gods are associated with *ṛta* in one or another way as Greek and Roman gods are linked with *Fate* (Moria, Fatum)⁵¹. The relation which the gods sustain to *ṛta* is variously stated⁵². The *devas* each in his own proper sphere, are *ṛta*, express *ṛta*, are the guardians and cherishers of *ṛta*⁵³. Sarasvatī, and all the river-goddesses also are thus said as *ṛtāvarīḥ* 'observers of divine-law, the cosmic order'. 'Flowing of water' is itself a *ṛta* and corresponds to the concept of *ṛta* as is expressed by the daily recurrence of dawn⁵⁴.

Yajatā : 'worthy of sacrifice or adoration', 'worshipful'⁵⁵.

Havaṁ juṣāṇā, 'listening to our invocation' (5, 43, 11=7, 24, 3). This epithet speaks of the responsive nature of the goddess. *Ghṛtāci*, 'abounding in water', 'shining with ghee', 'sprinkling ghee or water' (5, 43, 11=7, 24, 3); Sāyaṇa translates the word as *ghṛtam añcati*, 'bending water in spiral form', 'curling water'.

Śagmām no vācam uśati, 'fond of our pleasing praise' (5, 43, 11=7, 24, 3). It shows that the goddess on her own part does not expect that people may upbraid her for ruins thrust upon them by her mighty waves but she pines for a pleasing praise for her previous and ensuing responsive attitude.

Pāvīravī, 'possessing a weapon', 'carrying a *vajra*, thunderbolt' (6, 49, 7; 10, 65, 13). Sarasvatī is thought of as a goddess of the aerial region, therefore, she was conceived as carrying a thunderbolt as her weapon⁵⁶. Yāska translates it as *divyā vāk*. 'celestial speech'⁵⁷. But his etymological explanation— *Paviḥ* (Nigh. 2, 20) *śalyaḥ bhavati* | *Yat vipunāti kāyam* | *Tadyat pavīram āyudham* | *tadvān Indrah pavīravān*—suggests that *āyudhavatī*⁵⁸ Sarasvatī be linked with *pavīravān*⁵⁹ Indra, and should preferably be taken as *Mādhyamikā devatā*. It should not be identified with atmospheric Vāk, as we have observed above. 'Possessing a weapon' is itself suggestive of her place amongst the aerial gods.

Citrāyuh, 'possessed of wonderful vitality' (6, 49, 7). It is an epithet borne exclusively by Sarasvatī. Out of two plausible interpretations of Sāyaṇa for this word as *citrāgamanā*, 'of wonderful gait' *citrānnā*, 'possessed of diverse food', the latter is to be preferred because it refers to more effective and natural quality of the goddess associated with fecundity and fertility. Griffith's translation of *citrāyuh* as 'brisk with rare life' is also convincing in the light of modern recent researches. Geological evidence has confirmed that the Śivālaka range of the Himālaya was one of those ancient lands which were inhabited by human beings in hoary antiquity⁶⁰.

Kanyā, 'virgin', 'beautiful' (6, 49, 7). Griffith takes *pāvīravīkanyā* as one word without any solid ground. Sāyaṇa translates *kanyā* as *kamanīyā*, 'beautiful', which is quite right so far as the original meaning of the word indicates. But *kanyā* may also mean 'a virgin', the epithet translated as such would bespeak a number of suggestive qualities of the goddess. The presence of her other epithet *vīrapatnī* in the same hemistich of the *ṛc* does

not prevent us from translating *kanyā* as 'virgin' because *patnī* should not mean here 'a consort' but 'a protectress'.

Vīrapatnī, 'protectress of a hero or heroes' (6, 49-7). It has been discussed above¹¹. Sayāna translates it as 'the consort of *Vīra* i. e. Prajāpati' and also as 'the protectress of the heroes'. The latter one is more plausible in the context. But *vīra* is somewhat a specific epithet of Indra, though the Maruts are said as *vīrahā*⁸². Sarasvatī's role as 'protectress of Indra' is quite manifest⁸³, therefore, she may be taken as 'the protectress of *vīra* i. e. Indra'. Mait⁸⁴ suggests here that Sarasvatī should be substituted for *vīra* and not Prajāpati. But it did not, perhaps, occur to the mind of the learned scholar that nowhere in the RV has Sarasvatī been ever associated with any act of valiance.

Paravataghni, 'killer of the Pāraśvatas' (6, 61, 2). It has been discussed above⁸⁵.

Chora, 'herce' (6, 61, 7). Sarasvatī in her terrestrial and atmospheric forms is *ghora*, 'terrific, dreadful' like Indra who is characteristically said as *ghora*, 'herce'⁸⁷.

Hiranyavartini, 'having a golden path' (6, 61, 7). It has been discussed above⁸⁸. Sayāna explains *vartini* as chariot and the compound as meaning 'having a golden chariot'. This meaning does not seem to be correct. The words *rudra-vartini*⁸⁹, 'one whose path is dreadful' and *ghṛta-vartini*⁹⁰, 'one whose path is unctuous', are also applied to different deities in the RV. *Kṛiṇa-vartini*—'he whose path is marked by blackness' is an epithet of Agni⁹¹ and the sense of that term is fixed by the use of the synonym *kṛiṇadhvan*. Thus, in the context of the river-goddess Sarasvatī also, *vartini* should be translated as 'path' and not 'chariot'⁹².

Vīraghni, 'killer of Vīra', 'killer of enemies' (6, 61, 7). It has been discussed above⁹³. Killing Vīra was the most perilous act, all gods helped Indra in its accomplishment. The association of other gods in this enterprise is but to enhance the prestige and pre-eminence of their person, otherwise the most frequent reference to Indra against Vīra has ample reason to believe that it was Indra alone who accomplished this onerous

act. Similarly Sarasvatī also has been said to be contributing her mite to smite Vīra. She is, therefore, said as Vīraghni. Though Vīra does represent an abstract idea of obstruction,⁹⁴ it will not be correct to say here 'since the river Sarasvatī cleared off the obstructions in its path to flow on, she is said as Vīraghni'. Vīra is 'obstruction' but, in its most popular sense, is that obstruction which has stemmed the rivers to flow⁹⁵. Therefore, Vīra should mean in our context the famous foe of Indra or at the most 'enemy' in general.

Sapta-Svāsā, 'seven sistered' (6, 61, 16). Sarasvatī, the river-goddess has been said here as 'seven-sistered' and again as 'seven-fold' (*sapta-dhātū*)⁹⁶ but she is also said to be 'seventh', i. e., 'one of the seven rivers' (*saptāhi*)⁹⁷. At another place Sarasvatī is again mentioned separately from the Sapta-Sindhavah⁹⁸. In this context it has been observed by Macdonell and Keith⁹⁹ that the connection of Sarasvatī with the seven rivers is rather vague because from *Saptāhi* she seems to be a constituent of the seven rivers and from *Sapta-svāsā* she seems to be excluded from the system of the seven-rivers. Let us see what the word *sapta-svāsā* signifies and what is the relation of Sarasvatī with the Sapta-sindhavah.

First of all, the association of number seven with Sarasvatī seems to be mystic in character. The association with the mystic number seven is very popular in the RV⁸⁰ and we may not insist on here reading the reference essentially to the seven rivers. Skandadasvami⁸¹ and Sayāna interpret the word *sapta-svāsā* as not referring to terrestrial rivers, the Sapta-Sindhavah. Skandadasvami's interpretation and that of Sayāna that the reference here is made to seven metres, Gayatri and the like show that the scholars, too, read that a reference here to the mystic number seven is made; Skandadasvami in particular does not see here any reference to the geographical data.

However, if we take that the reference here is made to the terrestrial river-goddesses we may observe that Sarasvatī is spoken of in two ways (i) as a separate river from the system of seven-rivers, (ii) as one of the system of seven rivers. When Sarasvatī is said to be 'seven-sistered', it may be taken that she has five rivers of the Punjab, Sindhu and Kubhā as her sisters. That is why she is mentioned separately from the Sapta-Sindhavah in the RV⁸² and Avesta⁸³. Actually the system of seven-

rivers is not essentially five rivers of the Panjab, Sindhu or another river Kubhā, Haraihvātī or Sarasvatī. In 10,75, 5 we notice that the system of the seven main rivers is not the one that is popularly taken to be Sapta-sindhavaḥ. Thus we need not corroborate the view of Macdonell and Keith that the relation of the Sarasvatī with the Sapta-sindhavaḥ is vague, because 'Sapta-sindhavaḥ' is itself such a term which does not speak of any specific system of rivers but it can be applied to any system of seven rivers⁸⁴. That is, this concept of Sapta-sindhavaḥ has been changing from time to time⁸⁵.

Thus we may conclude that the Sarasvatī is mentioned with two systems of rivers in the R̥V. With the older system of the seven rivers, it has a sisterly relation and it is not one of the seven rivers and it is one of the rivers of the new system which is mentioned in 10, 75, 5.

Sapta-dhātu, 'seven fold' (6, 61, 12). This epithet also shows that Sarasvatī is possessed of seven limbs, i.e., seven streams of the old system are closely related to her⁸⁶.

Ā-papruṣī, 'pervading every where' (6, 61, 11). It has been discussed above⁸⁷.

Triśadhassthā 'having three seats' (6, 61, 6). It is an epithet which in its masculine form predominantly connected with Agni⁸⁸ but Viṣṇu⁸⁹ and Soma⁹⁰ are also spoken of as such.

Pañca-jātā Vardhayanti, 'causing to prosper the Five people' (6, 61, 6). Glorifying the goddess the seer says that Sarasvatī is one who makes the *Pañcajātāḥ* (= *Pañca-janāḥ*), 'the group of Five tribes' flourish. The term *Pañca-jātāḥ* may mean some heavenly five entities because they are called *yajñīyāsāḥ*, 'worthy of sacrificial worship'⁹¹ and *daivya jana*, 'heavenly people'⁹². At another place⁹³ it is clearly mentioned that they reside in heaven⁹⁴.

But on the other hand we cannot rule out that '*pañca-janāḥ*' does not mean terrestrial tribes at all. Being Indra's beneficiaries⁹⁵ they may be 'Five-warring tribes of Aryans' amongst whom he displays his power⁹⁶. They may be the confederation of the Turvasas, Yadus, Anus, Druhyus, and Purus⁹⁷. When Aśvins freed Atri, a mundane seer, from the strait pit; he was honoured by the Five people along with their subjects.⁹⁸ Agni is requested by (warrior-) worshippers that their glory may shine over the Five people⁹⁹. From these references and a few

and a few others it seems that the Five-people were mundane. In fact, it seems that to begin with the Five people were taken to be celestial beings, who were worshipped with oblations but thereafter that nomenclature was borne by the mundane people who played an active part in the growth of Vedic cult as a result of which they were helped to grow by Sarasvatī¹⁰⁰. Many other gods also are said to be as furthering the Five people¹⁰¹.

Vāje vāje havyā, 'to be invoked in every conflict' (6, 61, 12). It has been discussed above¹⁰².

Vibhvane kṛtā, 'carved out by Vibhvan' (6, 61, 13). It has been discussed above¹⁰³.

Upa-stutyā cikituṣā, 'to be extolled by the knower (of her majesty—Skandasvāmī)' (6, 61, 13). It corresponds to the idea contained in her epithet *yajatā*, (= *yaṣṭvyā*) mentioned above.

Saptathī, 'seventh' (7, 36, 6). It has been discussed above¹⁰⁴.

Sindhumātā, 'who has (celestial) river as its mother' (7, 36, 6). It has been discussed above¹⁰⁵.

Dharuṇam āyasipūḥ, 'protectress, an iron fortress' (7, 95, 1). It has been discussed above¹⁰⁶.

Pra-bābadhānā, 'capturing vehemently' (7, 95, 1). Sarasvatī flows on capturing vehemently all waters (*viśvo apah*) of other minor torrents¹⁰⁷.

Ekā, 'unique' (7, 95, 2). It is natural enough in a laudation to speak of the deity as unique or chief. Such laudation is at the root of the idea of monotheistic power¹⁰⁸.

Yatī giribhyaḥ ā samudrāt, 'flowing from mountains up to ocean' (7, 95, 2). Since this description does not agree with the small stream of modern Sarasvatī, scholars apply it to the Indus¹⁰⁹. Again finding that the modern Sarasvatī does not reach the sea, some scholars doubted whether Sarasvatī in this hymn stands for a river at all¹¹⁰. But the Sarasvatī did reach the sea and its dry bed has now been located and many ancient sites on its banks discovered. Thus the adoration of the river goddess is veracious¹¹¹.

Rāyaś cetanti bhuvanasya bhūreḥ, 'distributing riches to the vast or whole world', (7, 95, 2). Dr. B. R. Sharma¹¹² thinks that a terrestrial river 'cannot distribute the riches to the people of the whole world', therefore, he thinks that Sarasvatī in such *ṛcs* is 'more of celestial character than terrestrial'. But the

river-goddess (i.e., the River, who is thought of as a goddess), bestowing fertility on the lands, providing water vital for sustenance of life, conferring rich harvest (*yajasaḥ*, also meaning riches hence fame), etc., can be most naturally conceived in her laudations as distributing riches to people of the whole world. Laudations often contain a little flattery, we, therefore, need not doubt that such a request cannot be made to a River (i.e., the river-goddess)¹¹³.

Mitānubhīḥ...namasyair iyaṇā, 'approached by the worshippers with reverential salutations' (7, 95, 4). These words speak of the devotion of worshippers to the goddess Sarasvatī who approached her with kneeling postures or prostrations.

Rāya yujā, 'possessed of wealth' (7, 95, 4). By her riches she renders diverse comforts to her worshippers. At another place she has been said as distributing wealth¹¹⁴.

Juhvānā...namobhīḥ, 'invoked with salutations' (7, 95, 5). This attribute speaks of the devotion of worshippers to her.

Subhṛā, 'the bright one' (7, 95, 6; 7, 96, 2). This epithet is commonly applied to most of the Vedic deities including the Rivers (=river-goddesses)¹¹⁵. It is but to emphasise, generally, the outward but also inward appearance of a deity.

Avitṛi, 'one who protects (f.)' (7, 96, 2). It corresponds to *dharmānam*, *vīra-patnī*, *dhīrām avitṛi*, etc., in its nature.

Marutsakhā, 'associate of the Maruts' (7, 96, 2). It has been discussed above¹¹⁶.

Bhadrā, 'auspicious (*kalyāṇī*)' (7, 96, 3).

Akavāri (a-kava-ari—*Sāyāṇā*), 'not having weak enemies', 'not contemptible as a foe' (7, 96, 3).¹¹⁷

This epithet is suitably borne by Indra¹¹⁸. This epithet is meaningful because Sarasvatī as 'enemy of the atheists' is prayed at other places also to smite the revilers of gods¹¹⁹.

Sayamā, 'beautiful in form', 'easy to be bound or guided' (9, 81, 4).¹²⁰

Tanyavāḥ, 'a thunderous voice' or 'one who impels the atmosphere i.e., thunderous voice' (10, 65, 13)¹²¹. This epithet implies that Sarasvatī is a goddess of 'second function'. We shall go further to say that this epithet of Sarasvatī also speaks of her affinity with Indra, who in a Brahmana text is explicitly called thunder¹²².

In addition to it, certain epithets are borne by Sarasvatī as a member of the group in which more than two divinities are prayed collectively. She is thus *śajṣas*¹²³, 'containing comparable love', i.e., 'having responsive indulgence for the worshipper' like Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra and others; who with Sarasvatī are said *śajṣasāḥ*¹²⁴. She is said as *daśasyantī*, 'bounteous' along with Bhṛhadvā and Rākā¹²⁵. Sarasvatī is said as *svapā*, 'an active one', when all the three goddesses—she, Iā and Bhārati are said as *svapasaḥ*¹²⁶. As a constituent of Nadyāḥ Sarasvatī is said to be *sudughā*, 'of pleasant milk', *sudhārā*, 'of fair stream', and *svena payasā pṛpyānā*, 'swelling with her own water'¹²⁷.

Thus the epithets of Sarasvatī are much felicitous, illuminating and delightfully decorative. Their study with a few other functions of the goddess shows that she was thought of in her various aspects by the Rgvedic seers.

1. In later Vedic literature, however, such richness and colourfulness of the epithets of Sarasvatī, as we meet with in R̥V, are wanting.
2. See supra p. 10. Cf. Waters are invoked in the R̥V to cleanse a man from defilement : 10, 17, 10; 11.
3. Nigh. 1, 8; R̥V 1, 48, 16; 92, 13, 15; 4, 55, 9 and etc.
4. 10, 75, 8 and 1, 120, 10. 5. *Vājo balaṁ* (Nigh. 2, 9) *vego vā, tadavati vājini*, *Kāśasa*, *Sarasvatyāḥ svabhūta senā*, *Tadavati vājini*.
6. *Vājo hantī-lakṣaṇamānam, tad yasya usi sād vājini yāga-santatiḥ*, *Tadavati vājini*.
7. *Vāja* is believed to be present in the waters, AV 13, 1, 2; a text extolling the might and qualities of Sun.
8. See e.g. Indra : 1, 55; 22, 48, 16; 92, 7; Asvins : 1, 116, 19; Agni : 6, 1, 11; 8, 102, 9; and Soma : 9, 90, 2.
9. 7, 95, 6. 10. 3, 25, 3. 11. 9, 31, 2. 12. 10, 26, 7. 13. 10, 26, 9.
14. 6, 61, 6.
15. Having studied various contexts in which this word is used, it seems that *vāja* does not express a single concept but a group or complex of ideas, beliefs and conceptions. It is power manifesting in vegetative life, strength, potency, vigour, the last word being an approximately correct English equivalent. Dr. J. Gonda (*Aspects of Early Vignism* p. 43) connects the root *vāj* with the Latin *vego*, 'to be brisk, to set in motion' and *vigore*, 'to be in the prime of life', etc. English words like 'vigil' and 'vigour' are also derived from this root, Annandale, *The Students' Dictionary*, Blackie and Son, Bombay, 1910, pp. 784-85.

15 a) In several passages of the R̥V the word means speed, see, e.g., 2, 5, 1; 3, 53, 23; 6, 75, 7. 16. Ved. Ind., Vol. I, p. 401. 17. Nir. 11, 26.

18. See his comm. on 1, 3, 10; 1, 58, 9; 3, 3, 2; 8, 80, 10; 9, 93, 5 and AV 20, 35, 16.
19. Indices and Appendices to the Nirukta, Lahore, 1929, p. 79 (Devanāgarī figures).
20. 1, 58, 9; 60, 5; 61, 16; 62, 13; 63, 9; 64, 15, etc.
21. 8, 80, 10; 9, 93, 5; (and AV 20, 35, 16). 22. 3, 3, 2.
23. See supra pp. 10; 18. 24. Gods in general and Soma in particular impels such a speech : *Pūṣeva dhi-javanossi Soma*-9,88,3. Also see 6, 47,3; 7, 84, 4; 95, 5; 97, 32. He is the generator of hymns and maker of seers (9.96, 18). 25. VM, p. 18—'All the gods are guardians of honesty and righteousness'.
26. 7, 81, 6—Sāyana explains *sūnṛtā-vatī-priyasatyātmikā vāk tadvatī*
27. VM, p. 109. 28. See supra p. 18 also. 29. 7, 95, 4; 6; 8, 21, 17.
30. 3, 33, 3. 31. 7, 75, 8. 32. See supra pp.15;23 33. See supra p. 11.
34. 3, 33, 3. 35. 1, 23, 16; 3, 33, 3; 10, 9, 26; 10, 17, 10.
36. 7, 95, 5. 37. 2, 41, 16. 38. 7, 95, 4. 39. 7, 95, 2.
40. 7, 95, 1. 41. 6, 61, 13. 42. 7, 95, 4. 43. 6, 61, 13.
- Sindhu has also been said as such in 10, 75, 7. 44. 3, 6, 10.
45. 8, 73, 16. 46. 8, 25, 3. 47. 7, 56, 2; 10, 36, 2; 10, 66, 6.
48. 3, 54, 4; 4, 18, 6. 49. 3, 61, 6; 4, 52, 2. 50. 3, 33, 5; 56, 5.
51. Griswold, op. cit., p. 107.
52. Heaven and Earth are called 'the ancient parents (*mālarā*) of *ṛta* and 'whose sons are gods' (*devaputrā*)—6, 17, 7. Heaven and Earth, then are parents of gods and parents of *ṛta*.
53. For example, Uṣas is not independent of *ṛta*. She was borne in *ṛta* (*ṛtejā*—1, 113, 12) and so her task is to cherish and protect it. She does not infringe the heavenly ordinances (*daivyaṁ vratam*—1, 92, 12). the law of *ṛta* (*ṛtasya dhāma*—1, 123, 9) rather follows its rein (1, 123, 13). To one who doubts his existence Indra says : 'I exist, O singer, look upon me here, all that exists I surpass in splendour. The commandments of *ṛta* make me mighty. (8, 100, 3-4). Sūrya (Dadhikrā) is spoken of as *ṛta* (4, 40, 5). Aditi is '*ṛtasya patnī*', 'Queen over *ṛta*'. Of all gods the two chief Ādityas, Mitra and Varuṇa are most intimately connected with *ṛta*'—VM, p. 26.
54. Cf. Uṣas returns day by day to the place appointed—1, 123, 13.
55. Sāyana, Vēṅkaṭamādhava and Mudgala translate *yajatā*, as *yaṣṭavyā*, 'to whom sacrifice should be offered'.
56. See supra pp. 11; 15. 57. Nir. 12, 30.
58. As Udgītha and Sāyana translate, but the former takes *pāvira* and not *paṭsa* as standing for '*āyudha*'. 59. 10, 60, 3.
60. 'Patriot', Magazine section, March 16, 1969—A Review of the Research work done by the Deptt. of Geology, Punjab University in collaboration with the Oslo University.
61. See supra p. 17. 62. 1, 64, 4; 122, 1; 5, 54, 10.
63. 10, 131, 4-5. 64. OST. Vol. V, 3rd Ed. Amsterdam, 1967, p. 340, note 508. 65. See supra p. 13. 66. See supra p. 16;19

- 66A- See under 'I' Sarasvatī a goddess of Learning and Intellect ?
67. Cf. In 7, 28, 2 : Indra who having taken his weapon is invincible and by his mere resourcefulness (*kratu*) is *ghora*; in 2, 12, 5, being *ghora* he is stated to be able to diminish the possessions of the niggard; also Cf. 1, 167, 4; 169, 7. In 9, 89, 4, Soma is also said as *ghora*.
68. See supra pp. 10 - 11. 69. 8, 22, 14; 1, 3, 3; 10, 39, 11.
70. 7, 69, 1. 71. 8, 23, 19.
72. Sāyana has, however, translated '*hiraṇya-vartini*' 'having a golden path' i. e. golden banks when it has been applied to another river in 8, 26, 18. 73. See supra pp. 11; 13.
74. Louis Renou, Religions of India, London, 1953, p. 19.
75. Vṛtra is *nadinam paridhi*, 3, 33, 6. Also see VM, p. 58—60.
76. 6, 61, 12. 77. 7, 36, 6. 78. 8, 54, 4.
79. Vol. II, p. 438, note 20.
80. Refer to 'Vision in Long Darkness', op. cit., p. 19—20.
81. *Sapta ambādyah antarikṣa-nadyah tā, bhagīnyo yasyāḥ sā sapta-svasā*, 'seven-sistered is that who has Amba and etc., the seven rivers of the atmospheric region as her sisters'. Sāyana's interpretation — '*Gāyatrīādini sapta-chandānsi svasāro yasyās tādyāsi*', 'One who has Gāyatrī and the like—the seven metres as its seven sisters' — is the result of her erroneous conception that Sarasvatī in the ṚV is a *Jñāna-devatā*.
82. 8, 54, 4; and Khila 3, 6, 4.
83. In Avestā also reference to Hapta-hindu and the beautiful 'Haraihvātī' is made separately : Vendidad Fargard I, quoted from K. B. Pathak comm. Vol., p. 32.
84. N. G. Sardesai (Sir R. G. Bhandarkar comm. Vol. BORI, Poona, 1917, p. 94) curiously enough locates 'Seveu-rivers' in a country which is in Central Asia, in Russian Turkistan, North of the Ala Tau Range, East of the lower Illi River, and West of the Lepsa River, and identifies them as Lepsa, Baskan, Aksu, Sarkau, Biyen, Kartal, and Koksū.
- Bhattacharya, Haridas : K. B. Pathak comm. Vol., p. 32 identifies them with Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Godāvarī, Sarasvatī, Narmada, Sindhu and Kāverī, but is absolutely wrong to count Godāvarī and Narmadā in the Ṛgvedic system.
85. In the Mahābhārata Śalya Parva, 38, the system of seven-streams is different, similarly in the Purāṇas, the system of seven rivers differs in every text.
86. One may not agree with Sāyana that the system of seven rivers here comprises of the Gaṅgā and etc. because we have seen above that Sarasvatī was one of the system of seven streams—the Gaṅgā and others mentioned in 10, 75, 5.
87. See supra p. 10. 88. 3, 20, 2. Also see VM p. 93.
89. 1, 156, 5. 90. 8, 83, 5; 9, 103, 2. 91. 10, 53, 4; 5.
92. 10, 53, 6. 93. 10, 60, 4.
94. In his book 'The Ṛgveda as Land-Namabok' pp. 8-9, A.K. Coomaraswamy observes : 'In any case the Ṛgveda provides us with texts amply sufficient to prove that the kindreds which participate in the First Sacrifice are classes or categories of divine beings or principles,

- ancestors indeed of humanity, but not yet human in a biological sense. R. Sham Shastri (P. O. Vol. 7, p. 27) takes them to be five minor planets which again means that he has acknowledged their celestial character. In 1, 90, 10 Aditi has been identified with the Five People.
95. Cf. Indra is said as guard of the Five People—1, 100, 12. All the riches of the Five People are dependent on Indra—1, 176, 3.
97. Ved. Ind. Vol. I, pp. 466-67. Sayana's explanation that they were four castes and Nīṣādas or indigenous barbarians does not seem to be correct because in the period of the RV there were no such distinctions of caste.
98. 1, 117, 3.
99. According to a commentator Five People may mean 'five classes of beings viz., gods, Gandharvas and Apsaras, serpents and Pits.
100. Refer to 'Sacrifice in the R̥gveda', op. cit. p. 67.
101. See e. g., 7, 79, 1 and etc.
102. See supra p. 15.
103. See supra p. 31.
104. See supra p. 26.
105. See supra p. 26.
106. See supra p. 17. Sayana interprets *dharman* as *dharṇyitṛ*, noticing here the reversion of gender (līṅgavyatycna).
107. Venkamaḍhava says : *prakāśena badhnātī ātmani ekikurvātī gacchati*, 'flows on capturing vehemently i.e. gathering into itself ...'. This interpretation is happier than that of Sayana who translates the word as *bhīṣam badhāmāna*, 'preventing vehemently'.
108. VM, p. 17.
109. VM, p. 87. According to Dr. Das, op. cit. Indus and Sarasvatī are not identical.
110. N. Langlois : OST Vol. III, p. 241, note 13. Vol. II, p. 346, thinks that Sarasvatī in this hymn stands, not for a river but for 'the goddess of Sacrifice, with her libations'. 'These libations form a river, which flows from the mountains, where the sacrifice is performed and where Soma plant is collected. This river flows into Samudra (Sea) which is the vessel destined to receive the libations'.
111. The Lost Sarasvatī, Prof. Indras, Vallabhbhai Vidyapeeth, Gujarat, passim.
112. The Vedic Sarasvatī, CR, July, 1949, p. 55.
113. It is all the more incorrect to suggest that since Sarasvatī is incapable (being viewed as a tiny stream as it flows at present) of distributing riches to the whole world, therefore, this epithet should be applied to Indus—CR, July 1949, p. 55 and VM, p. 87.
114. 7, 95, 2.
115. Sarasvatī, Bṛhaddīva and Rākā all are said as '*subhāt*' (5, 42, 12). The Martis are also said as '*subhāt*'—'shining, beautiful' (1, 19, 5; 167, 4). In 1, 85, 3; 2, 36, 2; 8, 7, 25; 28 this epithet is used for their proper name. An epithet applied in dual form to Vipatī and Saurudr—3, 33, 1.
116. See supra p. 23f.
117. Sayana's interpretation *akūṣita-gamaṇa*, 'having gait free from contempt' does not seem to be convincing.
118. RV 3, 47, 5 (=6, 19, 11 and YV 7, 7, 36). Here Sayana apply translates this words as *akūṣita-satruḥ* or *prabhūta-satruḥ* 'not having weak enemies'. In the context of Sarasvatī also this translation is to be preferred.

- Svāmī Dayānanda's etymological explanation of this word (Y.V. 7, 36) is very dexterous. It reads : '*kauṭī dharmanam upadīśatīti kavā na kavāṣkavo dharmatīma tasyatīti satruḥ*', which means 'who is the enemy of the persons devoid of dharma'.
119. 6, 61, 3; 11.
120. *Satīgraha*, Sayana. Also Cf. Sarasvatī with Bharatī and Jīa (the two members with whom she forms a triad) is also called beautiful '*subhas*' 9, 5, 8'. It may also mean 'one who can be bound easily (by prayer), i.e. tractable, easy to be managed'. Cf. her epithet '*subhādā*'—AV 7, 11, 1.
121. *Stanayitṛ*, Sayana. The word in 1, 23, 1 stands for a 'roar' (of victory); in 1, 32, 13; 116, 12—for 'the thunderous voice'.
122. *Stanayitṛ evendratī*—SBr. 11, 6, 39. Sayana explains *stanayitṛ* in the sense of 'thunder cloud'.
123. 10, 65, 1
124. Udgītha translates this word as *samāna-pṛtīgalyā*, 'having similar or reciprocal love'.
125. 5, 42, 12. Sayana translates this word as *kāmān yacchanalyā*, 'bestowing desiderata'.
126. *Sukarmāṇāḥ*, 'of noble actions', Sayana (10, 110, 8).
127. 7, 36, 36.

Worship of the River-Goddess.

It has been shown above that objects like rivers, waters, sun and moon were glorified and worshipped by the Vedic worship-per but at the same time the deities having the same name were also glorified and worshipped. The Nairuktas thought of the first type of worship as heathenish and thus they originated an idea of the presence of a presiding deity in an object worship-ped by people.

No last word can be pronounced on which of these two modes of worship is anterior. The history of religious evolution and the behaviour of man indicate that the objects would have been deified and myths were woven around them, super-natural and divine powers were attached to raise them to the highest pitch of divinity. In other words, this order of worship of the deities would have been from below upwards but it is not found in literary monuments. 'These (literary monuments) show on the contrary a worship which steadily tends from above earthwards'.

1. Winternitz, Hist. of Indian Literature Vol. I, p. 75.
2. It was because of this attitude of the older priests that the AV. could not be taken as a Veda wherein the worship of trees and plants, herbs and medicines and even amulets is recommended for acquiring benefit to the self and casting harm on others.
3. E. W. Hopkins. Religions of India, p. 39.

Eulogies, Prayers and Invocations to Sarasvatī

Out of his conviction that a god displays a favourable and responsive attitude towards his devotees, the worshipper exalts him in order to obtain divine blessings and benisons and gain mundane boons and benefits. As part of His worship the devotee exalts the god, prays Him for bestowing the things for which he pines and invokes Him for help and succour in hour of need. Thus eulogy, prayer and invocation (i. e., prayer to come down for help) are three compartments of worship. Worship of a deity in the RV as such is performed by a worshipper to secure for him mostly personal ends. Eulogies, prayers and invocations to Sarasvatī are often contained combinedly in the *ṛcs*, however, we discuss them below separately.

Eulogies of Sarasvatī

A god is praised or eulogized in order to evoke his favour and good will. Śaunaka says that 'eulogy is expressed by means of name, form, action and relationship (of the god with his devotee)¹, that is, a god is glorified by recounting his elevating epithets, exalting vocatives, by describing his pleasing and lovable form and munificent actions and his relationship with (i. e., his nearness of responsive attitude to) his devotee.

Sarasvatī's action (which perhaps is a specific characteristic of Sarasvatī as Yāska² chooses it to delineate the personality of the goddess) of 'making manifest her mighty flood by her (prompt) action (against the enemies who come to disturb the sacrifice)' is contained in her eulogy, *Maho arṇaḥ Sarasvatī pra-cetayati ketunā*³. In the last hemistich of the same *ṛc* she is, therefore, said to be 'one who presides over (*virājati*) all (*viśvaḥ*) the prayers or sacrifices (*dhiyaḥ*) (of her devotees). That is, she shines over (or accepts) the prayers or sacrifices of the suppliant.

In Sarasvatī rests all the food, that is, she makes crops grow in abundance with her fertile waters.⁴ Sarasvatī's mighty flood which is limitless, inviolable, swift-moving and agile, goes ahead with a thunderous voice⁵. As Sūrya transgresses days and they never return, similarly, Sarasvatī transgresses the despicable fiends⁶. Sarasvatī, the seven-sistered, dear amongst the dear ones of the worshippers was also dear to the forefathers of the worshipper⁷. She pervades the wide tracts of earth and the atmosphere. Stationed in three regions she, of seven component parts, makes the Five people thrive⁸. In majesty, Saras-

vati is known perfectly amongst the mighty ones, she is unique (*anyā*) because of her glistening glory (or food); she is most active amongst the active ones; she has been carved out by Vibhvan wide like a chariot for victory; she should, therefore, be praised by the sagacious seer.⁹ Sarasvatī, the seventh, one who has (celestial) ocean as her mother, flows along with other rivers, who wish for our food (*yaśasaḥ vāyaśānāḥ* i. e., who expect oblations from us), who have copious milk (i. e., life sustaining water, *sudughāḥ*) and who have fair streams (*sudhārāḥ*) and who swell with their own water¹⁰. Sarasvatī and Agni also protect his riches from the robber, who has been favoured by the Maruts¹¹. Sarasvatī flows rapidly with a life-giving (*dhāyasā*) flood of water (*prakṣodasā*); she is protectress (*dharuṇam*), as it were, an iron fortress; she flows straight like a road, captivating all waters; (of other streams of minor stature) in majesty or might (*mahinā*) she is another ocean.¹² Sarasvatī which flows from the mountains to the sea, the (most) pious amongst the streams, alone (*ekā*) recognised (*cetat*) Nahuṣa, that is responded to his entreaty and supplied him opulent milk and ghee¹³. Sarasvatī along with Indra is a model of munificence followed by the munificent kinglings of this mundane sphere, one amongst them is the peerless king Citra¹⁴. Along with Aśvins, Sarasvatī renders help of refreshing Indra (perhaps by her waters) when he had drunk with might (i. e., had overdrunk)¹⁵.

1. *Stuti tu nāmnā rūpeṇa karmaṇā bāndhavana ca-Br. Dev. 1, 7.*

2. Nir. 11, 27.

3. 1, 3, 12. *Maho arṇaḥ*, 'great flood' is also taken as an appellative of Sarasvatī by some scholars. Dr. V. S. Agrawala (Vision in Long Darkness, p. 191) takes Sarasvatī as a Great Flood released from the waters of the Primeval Ocean, but Yāska has not hinted at such a notion contained in these words. Our rendering, i. e., taking *maho arṇaḥ* in the accusative form seems to be a bit more preferable when it is viewed that by taking *maho arṇaḥ* as an appellative of Sarasvatī, we shall be depriving the verb—*pra-cetayati*, to have its object.

4. 2, 41, 17. 5. 6, 61, 8. Cf. 10, 75, 3: Sindhu is also said as rushing on bellowing like a bull. His roar is lifted upto heaven from earth. 6. 6, 61, 9. 7. 6, 61, 10; *Suṣṭā purāṇanāḥ Ṛṣibhiḥ sevita*, Sāyaṇa. 8. 6, 61, 11. 9. 6, 61, 13.

10. 7, 36, 6. 11. 7, 40, 3. 12. 7, 95, 1. 13. 7, 95, 2.

14. 8, 21, 17. It is not clear how Br. Dev. (VI, 61) arrived at the story of Citra being the king of rats. Dr. K. R. Poddar, discussing 'contribution of patrons', carves out the career of king Citra; Sacrifice in the Rgveda, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1953, p. 183.

15. 10, 131, 5.

Prayers and Invocations made to Sarasvatī*

When a devotee is convinced of the munificence of his worshippable god, he requests him for his blessings in the form of certain mundane (both concrete and abstract) and heavenly boons. Thus faith is at the root of the prayer and prayer in such a case becomes an outlet for pouring out whatever is most pressing on one's mind. In the *īcā* pertaining to Sarasvatī, we come across generally with two types of prayers which may be termed, 'ritualistic prayers' and 'petitional prayers'. By 'ritualistic prayers' we mean 'those songs which contain invitations to the deity to come to accept the sacrifice'; for example :

Yajñam vaśīṇ dhīyāvāsuh,

'may she, rich by devotion, desire our sacrifice' (1, 3, 10).

Yajñam dadhe Sarasvatī,

'may Sarasvatī accept our sacrifice' (1, 3, 11).

A no...Sarasvatī yajā gantū yajñam,

'may worshipful Sarasvatī accept our sacrifice' (5, 43, 11).

Asadyasmin barhiṣi madayasva,

'Seated upon the sacred grass, be joyful' (10, 17, 8).

Petitional prayers may be said to be those which are more intimately connected with the social life and needs of the individual who is a member of the community. We find that almost in all prayers of this type the Vedic poet asks for 'sons, food and riches and safety from the hands of diseases, fiends and foes'. Many such prayers are addressed to Sarasvatī. As society is a moving progressive phenomenon, the contents of petitional prayers also naturally change.

Indulging in a little digression, we observe here that the phenomenon of 'fixation' of a prayer was the main reason which turned the spontaneous prayers of the Rgvedic seers into mere spells later on. The ritualistic prayers tend to become spells soon for they are often repeated, they have always to be uttered in a particular atmosphere and thus tend to become 'fixed' in character both verbally and in spirit. Out of the numerous Vedic repetitions compiled by Bloomfield, a very large number would be seen as coming from these ritualistic prayers. In petitional prayers a god is often prayed to bless the worshipper with food, wealth and prosperity. It holds good in the case of Sarasvatī also; for its illustration see the following prayers addressed to Sarasvatī :

tional prayers also the refrains like *Yayam pāta śvasitibhiḥ sada nah* and *Bṛhad vademā vidāhe svavāh* are illustrative of this phenomenon of 'fixation' of a prayer. In the context of Sarasvatī also we can quote at least one such petitional prayer as has become in latter period a spell for making a woman fruitful.

Now we take up the account of the prayers addressed to Sarasvatī being a member of the 'Tisro Devī'. Ritualistic prayers are often addressed to her along with her other two companions. She with others is invoked to visit the sacrifice² to sit upon the sacred *kusā* grass strewn at sacrifice³. Like other gods of status, Sarasvatī is also implored singly to visit the sacrifice. She is invoked as such not by the present worshipper alone but also by Fathers who circumambulate the *yajña* having come from the south (their quarter)⁴. In another passage⁵ she, the holy Sarasvatī, is implored to come from high mountains, as it were, from heaven (to earth) to visit the sacrifice of the worshippers. At sacrifice she is implored to accept the present prayers of the sacrificer (*īmā brahma Sarasvatī jusaṇva*, 2, 41, 18).

In the *Viśvedevāḥ* prayers, Sarasvatī is requested, along with other gods, to approach (the worshippers), i. e., visit and accept or take delight in the prayer or sacrifice (of the worshippers)⁶. Again in a similar prayer, Sarasvatī, in conjunction with Dhīs (Holy Thoughts and Purāṇdhī, is prayed to pay heed to the words of the suppliant⁷. With Dhīs in particular, she is requested to be gracious⁸. Similarly, along with other river-goddesses, she is requested to listen to the song (*stoma*, 'call' or 'prayer')⁹. Like Agni who is characteristically an intermediary between gods and men¹⁰, Sarasvatī has also been prayed to carry the *yajña* (to gods)¹¹. She is not only prayed to accept the *Yajña*¹², but also implored to protect it¹³. Sarasvatī, the protectress of the rituals or devotional songs (*dhitānavitī*) is prayed to protect (prayer or sacrifice)¹⁴. Along with other deities such as Pśūan, Viśṇu, and the Seven Rivers, Sarasvatī is prayed to protect the sacrifice of the worshipper¹⁵. As a constituent of the Three-Goddesses, Sarasvatī along with the other members of the triad is prayed to protect the (strewn) sacred grass (*barhiḥ*, which symbolically stands for *yajña*) that is a flawless (*acchidram*) refuge (*śaraṇam*) of the sacrificers¹⁶.

In petitional prayers a god is often prayed to bless the worshipper with food, wealth and prosperity. It holds good in the case of Sarasvatī also; for its illustration see the following prayers addressed to Sarasvatī :

- (i) *Rāyas poṣaṁ yajamāneṣu dhehi*,
'Give wealth and nourishing food to the sacrificers' (10, 17, 9).
- (ii)*Subhre stuvate rāsi vājān*,
'O blessed one, give strengthening food to him who exalts you' (7, 95, 6).
- (iii) *Sarasvatī tad gr̥nate vayo dhāt*,
'May Sarasvatī give full life to one who lauds' (10, 30, 12).
- (iv) *Radā Puṣeva naḥ sanim*,
'Like Pūṣan, i. e., acting like Pūṣan, give us booty' (6, 61, 6).
- (v) *Sarasvaty-abhi no neṣi vasyo*,
'Take us, Sarasvatī, to the treasure, i. e., help us find the treasure' (6, 61, 14).

At another place¹⁷ the river-goddess Sarasvatī is prayed to give water, rich in ghee and honey; that is, the goddess is requested to give invigorating food. She is also besought to bring food that grants immunity from disease¹⁸. In Viśvedevāḥ prayers, Sarasvatī along with other gods is prayed to make the food abundant for the worshipper¹⁹. Along with other goodesses like Bṛhaddivā and Rākā, Sarasvatī is prayed by worshippers to think of wealth for them.²⁰

Another prayer popular with the Vedic worshipper is for securing general well-being and protection. Sarasvatī is also prayed as such by a worshipper when he says: *Sarasvatī noḥ subhagā mayas karat*^{20(a)}, 'May auspicious Sarasvatī grant us happiness' She is also besought to sanction well-being and good-luck for her worshipper²¹. Again in a prayer made exclusively to the goddessess, Sarasvatī as one of them is prayed to grant general well-being (*svasti*) and protection (*ūti*)²².

Another stock prayer of the Vedic worshipper is for gaining wealth coupled with brave sons. Sarasvatī also, along with other deities is requested to give wealth with noble offspring²³. We have already referred to a prayer (10, 184, 2) in which Sarasvatī in conjunction with other gods, has been prayed to hold the impregnation of a woman.

Sometimes the goddess is prayed to bless the worshipper with abstract things like glory.²⁴ Along with Iḷā and Bhārati, too, Sarasvatī is prayed to inspire for the glory (*śrīye*)²⁵,

In her *ghorā* form, Sarasvatī is approached for help by warring tribes²⁶. She is implored by the devotees to kill detractors and the progeny of the sorcerer Bṛsaya²⁷. Since in heaven she stood by the side of Indra who kills the Chief of Śaṇḍikas, she is invoked by the warrior to conquer his foes (on earth).²⁸

She is prayed to protect man who calls her for help like Indra at the commencement of a battle fought for the attainment of booty (*ahane hite*)²⁹. As a killer of the enemies (*vytraghṇī*), she is requested to listen to the eulogy of her devotees *vaṣṭi suṣṭutim*)³⁰.

Sarasvatī is invoked 'to respond with her association towards the friendship and fondness for her proximity', *juṣasva naḥ sakhyā veśyā ca* and 'not to let the worshippers go away from her fertile lands to tracts far off which are barren being devoid of her. At another place the worshippers pray that Sarasvatī may respond to their prostration for remaining in her periphery of bliss and may they resort unto her, the most beloved, like a tree (giving shelter and shade)³¹. With Gnā-s, she is requested to grant the eulogist again an unassailable and flawless refuge³².

From the account of such 'petitional prayers' as are addressed to Sarasvatī, one can very safely say that desiderata of the Vedic worshipper is limited to a very few things which are quite simple in nature and extent. His aspirations range between the gains of brave progeny and long life, rich food and prosperity in general, immunity from marauders and diseases and conquest of his foes.

Ṛcs which contain both praise and prayer of a deity are a few in the R̥V, says Śaunaka.³³ In the context of Sarasvatī, we may quote a beautiful *ṛc* of this type which reads:

'Yas te stanāḥ śasayo yo mayo bhūr

yena viśvā puṣyasi vāryāni |

'Yo ratnadhā vasuvid yaḥ sudatrah

Sarasvatī tam iha dhātave kaḥ || (1, 164, 49).

Śarasvatī, may we drain that breast of your, which is exhaustless, source of pleasure, by which you feed all choicest things, which is wealth giver, treasure finder and free bestower,' (R. T. H. Griffith).

This is a sincere prayer of a child to its mother whom he praises to evoke her filial love. Sarasvatī is here invoked in the form of a 'mother cow who is suckling all'.³⁴ The River goddess is first praised that her breast (i. e. her bed of water; cf. *pīpivāṁsam Sarasvataḥ stanam*-7, 96, 6-there, too, *stana* stands for water-bed) is exhaustless, spring of pleasure, with which she feeds all best things, that is giver of wealth, finder of treasures (*vasus*), and munificent (*sudatrah*). She is then prayed by the worshippers to suckle them with that breast for their sustenance.

The process of glorification is incomplete if we do not recount the earlier instances of the blessings of a god that are obtained as a result of his prayer. In order to remind the god that he did bless a fellow-being on a certain occasion in the past and thus to evoke his response for himself the worshipper recounts the favours done by the god in the case of others. Such a prayer is pregnant with praise. On one side the god is reminded that he should act with favourable justice to the present worshipper also by not discriminating him from the man blessed previously and on the other side the god is glorified because the surety of his blessing is impressed upon his fresh devotees. Recounting such favours done by Sarasvatī, the Vedic worshipper says that as a result of his devotion, Sarasvatī gave Vadhṛtṣvā a fierce Divodāsa, who was a canceller of debts and exterminator of the Pāṇis³⁵. It was Sarasvatī alone who blessed the king Nahuṣa and provided him with his desiderata, to wit, opulent milk and ghee for carrying on his avowed *yajña*³⁶ (for 1000 years³⁷). She helped devoted men to get back their lands annexed by the enemy and let flowed her water to their benefit³⁸. Sarasvatī is also beheld to be ensuring reward for the devotees of Soma rather students of the *Pavamān* hymns. We see her as drawing forth water, milk, butter and honey for him (i.e. concerning on him the life-giving sapful objects) who holds with his mind the hymns dedicated to purifying Soma—the essence (i. e., the savour of life) collected by seers³⁹.

1. *Garbhān dhatī Sinvati, garbhān dhatī Sarasvatī* | *Garbhān te āsīnau devāḥ dhātīm puṣkarasrajā* || (10, 184, 2). Hopkins

quotes it as one of the few incantatory verses found in the R.V., Kell-

gions of India, p. 149, n. 3.

2. 9, 5, 8; 3. 1, 13, 9; 3, 4, 8 (=7, 2, 8); 10, 110, 8.

4. 10, 17, 9. 5, 5, 43, 11. 6, 5, 46, 2; 7, 39, 5; 9, 81, 4.

8. 7, 35, 11. 9. 10, 75, 5. 10. VM, p. 96. 11. 1, 3, 10—

acc. to Śāyana's comm. 12. 1, 3, 11—*Tajhām dadhe Sarasvatī*.

13. 6, 49, 7—*Vṛpanti dhīyam dhātī Śāyana's comm.* reads *dhīyam yajñakhyam*

karma. 14. 6, 61, 4. 15. 8, 54, 4. 16. 2, 3, 8.

17. 10, 64, 9. 18. 10, 17, 8. 19. 6, 50, 12. 20. 5, 42, 12—*vart-*

asyanti—*asmanbhyam dhānam icchanti*—Śāyana. 20. (a) 1, 89, 3, 21. 7, 96, 3.

22. 2, 32, 8. 23. 3, 54, 13, *dhātī rayīm saha-vram*; also cf. 2, 11, 13.

24. 2, 41, 16. 25. 1, 188, 8. 26. See supra p. 15.

27. 6, 61, 3. 28. 98, 2, 30, 8. 29. 6, 61, 5. 30. 6, 61, 7.

31. 7, 95, 5. 32. 6, 49, 7—*Gnābhīracchīdram śarnam sajoṣa durā-dharyam*

grāṇa yajñas |

34. Dr. V. S. Agrawala, *Vision in Long Darkness*, p. 192.

Relationship of Sarasvatī with Her Devotees.

As to the relationship of Sarasvatī with her devotee, we see that sometimes the worshipper does not have a direct access to the goddess and in that case either a bard¹ or Agni² is requested to act as an intermediary to evoke the blessings of the goddess. Worshippers also refer to the ancient relations with the goddess on the ground that she has been attended to by their forefathers, she is, therefore, called (most) dear among the dear ones (i. e., their kith and kin)³. At another place also, she has been addressed as *prīyāmanā* 'the dearest'. The antiquity and hence popularity of her worship amongst the Vedic worshippers is also alluded to by the words *Sarasvatīm sukṛto alwayam*, 'the pious (previous sacrificers) summoned Sarasvatī aforetime', again she is called one who is invoked with a hymn of older times (*purvā*)⁴ *nivīdā*⁵. Sarasvatī would have responded in past to the call of ancestors of the present singer who says: *Sarasvatī yā saralāṁ yajātha svadhābhīr devī pṛībhīr madantī*.....

which glorify Soma.

Upon the desirability of studying *Pavamān* hymns, i. e., those hymns special relation with the circle of students. The *ṛc* is but to impress does the same. Sarasvatī is not to be taken here as having any the student of *Pavamān* hymns while in the present *mantra* Sarasvatī In the *mantra* preceding to that of ours, Mātariśvan is said as blessing 39. 9, 67, 32; The hymn 9, 67 has two *phala-māntṛas* towards its close. 35. 6, 61, 1. 36. 7, 95, 2. 37. Bṛ. Dev. 6, 20-24. 38. 6, 61, 3.

of sacrifice)⁷.

It is out of this proximity or closeness of relations that the singer sincerely supplicates the goddess not to drive him away

from her beautiful lands watered by her to those which are sapless

and barren being devoid of her. Such a request made at the

close of the *sūkta* exhibits the terse but ardent fondness and

fervour of a devotee for her worshippable goddess.

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shipper to point out to a long tradition through which the worship

of the deity has come down to younger generations. See e.g., 3, 39, 2; it refers to the hoary antiquity of Indra's worship and is couched almost in a similar style as we get in 1, 89, 3. But it must be understood here that the antiquity of Sarasvatī's worship is to be taken in relative terms. We have pointed out elsewhere that the worship of Sarasvatī cannot be pushed back as far as that of Indra, Varuṇa and the Aśvins because they are much more anthropomorphized, and have taken a number of strides ahead of Sarasvatī in the phased race of their conceptual development.

7, 10, 17, 8. 8. 6, 61, 14.

Is Sarasvatī a Goddess of Learning and Intellect in the R̥gveda?

Sarasvatī, who according to her present popular concept (that we come across in the Purāṇas, the Smṛtis, Hymnal and Classical Literature) is a goddess of Learning and Intellect, never appears in such a form in the R̥.V. In the evolution of the Indo-European pantheon, if we take Vedic Sarasvatī as a correspondence of the Indo-Iranian Anāhitā, then she should be thought of as a deity who would have been popular amongst the peasantry or mercantile class, being the deity of the 'third-function' and not amongst the Brāhmaṇas, the custodians of learning¹.

The interpretation of the word *dhī* as intellect, in the context of the *ṛcs* pertaining to Sarasvatī, by the scholiasts like Sāyaṇa and others, has led them and others to think of Sarasvatī as the goddess of Learning/Vedic Lore or Muse of Poetry². Though the Nighaṇṭu (3, 9) takes the word *dhī* as a synonym of wisdom, yet almost in all contexts of the R̥.V. *dhī* means *karma* *Śilpikarma*, 'artifice,' *stutikarma*, 'eulogy,' or *yajñakarma*, 'sacrifice'³. *Dhī* also denotes intellect (*prajñāna*, *prajñā*) but this is relatively a modern meaning of the word. The Nighaṇṭu has many such words; for example, 'Sarasvatī' meaning speech is also a modern word recorded there in the Nighaṇṭu⁴.

Now, even if we take for argument's sake that *dhī* stands for *prajñā*, i.e., intellect in the panegyrics of Sarasvatī and elsewhere, we cannot say that 'influencing intellect' is a distinct feature of Sarasvatī and Sarasvatī is a goddess of Intellect or Knowledge. In almost similar words and style, other gods are also invoked to protect *dhī*. If Sarasvatī is invoked as the protectress of *dhī* (*dhīnām avitrī*), Bhaga, the Maruts and Indra are also invoked in the same tune⁵. Sarasvatī is said as perfecting our *dhī*⁶, and prayed to bestow *dhī*⁷. But all gods are regarded as *dhiyaṇ-dhātāḥ*, 'the bestowers of *dhī*'⁸. Indra is

implored to bestow *dhī*⁹; he taught the poet (the technique of) the *dhī-s*¹⁰. Mitra-Varuṇa are said as perfecting (*sādhantā*) the ghee-fed (*ghṛtāci*) *dhī*¹¹. The Vasus are perfecting *dhī* (prayer) and *yajña*¹². Pūṣan makes each *dhī* (*dhiyam dhiyam*) of ours effective (*pru-siṣadhātī*)¹³. The epithet *dhiyāvasu* borne by Sarasvatī is often applied to Agni, and sometimes to Indra and Soma¹⁴. The deified *dhī* and *Purandhī* (Bounty) (associated with whom Sarasvatī is thought of as a goddess of Learning) are not only associated with Sarasvatī¹⁵, but they also appear with other gods¹⁶. Sarasvatī is not the only deity who impels *dhī* but other gods in the R̥.V.¹⁷ are also implored to impel *dhī* for the benefit of worshippers. Again blessing a student is not characteristic to Sarasvatī alone¹⁸.

It seems quite natural that in all these contexts, *dhī* stands for *karma* in its wider sense, i.e., comprising *śilpi-karma*, 'artifice', *stuti-karma*, 'eulogy' and *yajña-karma*, 'sacrifice'. It will also be uncomplimentary to the god, and we shall be shrinking his sphere of influence, if we translate *dhī* merely as song, prayer or intellect. Every god of the pantheon, we have seen above, is influencing our *dhī*, i.e., every *karma* of ours, that is why he is implored to impel or perfect it. That is, by interpreting *dhī* as mere intellect, we shall be dwarfing the stature of Sarasvatī. Sarasvatī was holding her sway in the R̥gvedic period on the people of all classes, on the Brāhmaṇas of good intellect¹⁹, on the Kṣatriyas who prayed to her at the commencement of battle²⁰ and on the peasantry and mercantile class²¹. The *āyudha-pūjā*, 'worship of weapons' is done as a part of Sarasvatī worship even today; the artificers worship their tools and weapons specific for their profession or trade²². It is only by interpreting *dhī* in its broader sense that we can trace back the association of all classes with the goddess Sarasvatī and not through the restricted meaning of *dhī* as intellect. One need not, therefore, think with A. B. Purani²³ that the Vedic Ṛṣi refers to some psychological aspect of the power called Sarasvatī when he prays: *Sarasvatī ... dhiyam dhāt*; or sings: (*Sarasvatī*) *dhiyo viśvā virājati*, or praises her: *Sarasvatī sādhayanti dhiyam naḥ*, and so on. Thus we may conclude that Sarasvatī in her R̥gvedic concept cannot be thought of as a goddess of Learning and Knowledge because imparting knowledge or influencing intellect is such a characteristic which does not belong to her exclusively.

Furthermore, Sarasvatī became the goddess of Learning, i. e., the deity dispensing Learning and Knowledge only after her identification with Vak, Speech/Learning. That is, in the conceptual development (as we shall see hereafter), Sarasvatī was first identified with Vak, Speech/Learning (deified knowledge) and then she became a deity imparting knowledge, etc. Sarasvatī has never been seen as Divine Speech/Knowledge in the RV. Therefore, we should not take Sarasvatī as a goddess of Speech/Knowledge in the RV.

Had Sarasvatī been the goddess of learning, she would have been the most popular cynosure of poets and philosophers right from the Rgvedic time. On the other hand, we see that it was Uśas and not Sarasvatī in the RV, who had been inspiring the seers to write first rate poetry.

1. See Dumézil's views on the tripartite social structure of Indo-Euro-

pean Society and its corresponding gods of first-, second-, and third-function. Sarasvatī in the RV, seems to be a Vedic correspondence of the Indo-Iranian Anahitā. Both Sarasvatī and Anahitā are akin to Roman-goddess Freyja in their characteristics. All the three goddesses represent a character of a female divinity of third function of Indo-European pantheon. Refer to Littleton, The New Comparative Mythology, California, 1966, pp. 7-15.

2. See e. g., Śāyana's comm. on the RV 1. 3. 10; 2. 3. 8; 3. 54. 13 and etc. See e. g., 1. 2. 7; 1. 61. 16 (=AV. 20. 35. 16); 3. 34. 5; 6. 49. 7; 8. 7. 2; 10. 74. 3. Also see Ved. Ind. Vol. I, p. 401.

4. Rajavade, Yaska's Nirukta, Vol. 1, 1940, p. 393.

5. (a) *Bhagam dhyo svitarā no asya* 7. 36. 8.

(b) *Martu mandasā dhyam lokam ca vājino vantu* 7. 36. 7.

(c) *Dhyo vājebhir avitā* 8. 46. 11.

6. *Sarasvatī sādhyantī dhyo nā* 2. 3. 8.

7. *Sarasvatī dhyam dhāt* 6. 49. 7.

8. 7. 2. 2.

9. *..... dhyam dhāt* 1. 61. 16.

10. *Acayad dhyā imā jarit* 3. 34. 5.

11. 1. 2. 7. 12. 10. 74. 3. 13. 6. 49. 8.

14. To Indra : 1. 61. 16; 62. 13; 63. 9; 8. 80. 10. To Agni : 1. 58. 9; 60. 5.

16. With Indra : 8. 69. 1. With Bhaga, Sathsa and Riches : 7. 35. 2. With

Bhaga, Agni and Nasatyas : 7. 39. 4.

17. See e. g., Sun is supplicated—*Dhyo yo nāh pracodayāt* 3. 62. 10

18. In two *Phala mantras* (31 & 32) at the end of the hymn 9. 67, which mention the fruit or blessing for a student of *Phaṇḍa* hymns, Mātarīvan is the first to bless the student. Sarasvatī is the second deity to bless him.

19. In 1. 31 Sarasvatī may also be said as inspiring the people of intellectual pursuits—*ceṇantī sumatīnam*.

20. 6. 61. 5.

21. Vajyas had a fascination for the proximity of the river-goddess—6. 61. 14.

22. India Recalled : Cornelia Sorabji, p. 225-26.

23. Studies in Vedic Interpretation, p. 111.

Is Rgvedic Sarasvatī, the Cradleland of the Aryans ?

The region of the Sarasvatī was marked for consistent religious activities¹. Such activities continued for many centuries together in the later Vedic period and post-Vedic period, as will be seen later. Great sages like Gṛtsamada² (a descendant of Sunahotra), Vasiṣṭha³, Vadhṛyaśva⁴, Nahuśa⁵ and the like, coming from various families, conducted their rituals on the banks of the Sarasvatī and thus added to the sanctity and celebrity of this glorious river.

Dr. A. C. Das⁶ has striven hard to prove that the region of Sarasvatī was the cradleland of Vedic Aryans. Some of the evidence put forth by him lacks force and hence cannot be taken as a final word on the subject. For example, he takes *deva-kṛta-yoni*, 'the god-fashioned region,' to which the twin rivers flow⁷ as Sapta-sindhu. But in the context this meaning does not fit in well, because the rivers are rushing towards the sea (watery home—*yoni* made by gods) with swelling waves. He further equates this *deva-kṛta-yoni* with *deva-nirmīta-desa* of Manusmṛiti (2, 17). First of all, *deva-kṛta-yoni* and *deva-nirmīta-*

desa do not give a common meaning, for, *yoni* and *desa* are not synonymous though there is a striking similarity in the words *kṛta* and *nirmīta*. Secondly, *devanirmīta-desa* of Manu is one which is between the Sarasvatī and the Drśadvatī, i. e., Brahmadvāta and not Sapta-sindhu. But the culture of Rgvedic Aryans seems to have the Sapta-sindhu, i. e., 'the land watered by the seven-rivers', as their cradleland rather than 'the region between the Drśadvatī and the Sarasvatī. The region of the Sarasvatī seems to have been occupied by the Aryans later because their advance into India had been from North-West to East⁸ and not from East to North-West, as Dr. Raj Ball Pandey thinks⁹. At one time, however, the Sarasvatī was the easternmost boundary of the Aryan-holds. Though in the RV, Sarasvatī is, verily, mentioned as one of the seven rivers¹⁰, in other references it is separate from the ancient Sapta-sindhu^{10(a)}. This shows that Sarasvatī has been mentioned in relation to two systems of seven rivers, because it will be difficult to account how Sarasvatī which was one of the seven rivers had at the same time seven rivers as her sisters. Factually, as we have mentioned above, the Sapta-sindhavaḥ is a term which would have been applied

to at least two systems of seven rivers in the RV.¹¹ The system in which the Gaṅgā has also been mentioned, i.e., of 10, 75, 5 seems to be of later age because it has been mentioned only once. It also tends to show that the Aryans had been advancing from the ancient Sapta-sindhavaḥ towards the eastern side, i.e., the Sarasvati was not the cradleland of the Aryans but it fell on the way of their advance towards the east. Moreover, the sacredness of the land watered by the Sarasvati cannot lead us to assume that this land was the original home of the Aryans, rather this sacredness esteemed to be higher than others bespeaks the locus of the composition of the poem. It is always the result of a notion that may be termed as 'regional patriotism' that a writer speaks of his land as higher than others.

Dr. A. C. Das also observes that when Sarasvati has been called *ambitamā* and *amba* in 2, 41, 16 and at another place¹² a worshipper invokes the goddess not to thrust him away from her proximity to barren lands far off, the Vedic Ṛṣi betrays his attachment towards her motherland, the region of Sarasvati. *Ambitame* and *amba*, the vocatives are applied to a river-goddess, but we know that all waters in general are styled as *mātaraḥ*¹³; Vipāt, another river goddess has also been regarded as *māṛitamā*¹⁴. The Nighaṇṭu also has *mātaraḥ* as synonymous of streams. Though Dyaus (Heaven) has been styled as Father and Pṛthivi (Earth) as Mother, the concept of taking the country as the motherland is met with first of all in the *Pṛthivi-sūkta* (12, 1) of the Atharvaveda¹⁵.

Hereafter Dr. Das takes a recourse to what he calls a 'geological fact' contained in the RV. 2, 41, 17 to prove that the region of Sarasvati was the original land of the Aryans. From *īve viśvā Sarasvati śritāyūṁṣi devyām*, he infers, this sacred river has been described to be the support of all (life) which probably means that all animals were evolved in the region of Sarasvati. 'This certainly accords with the geological fact', he adds that the Panjab was the most ancient life-producing region in India.....in the famous Śivālika beds.....have been found the vast stores of extinct mammalia,.....and.....the Sarasvati has her source.....in that region. The Rgvedic Aryans must have been aware of the existence of these vast stores of extinct mammalia to justify them in saying that the Sarasvati was the source and support of all life¹⁷. There is a little doubt that the

Śivālakas have given a cue to the existence of life in hoary antiquity there¹⁸, but to take *āyūṁṣi* as meaning 'animals who suckle their young ones' is basically wrong. It is because in the Nighaṇṭu (2, 3) we have *āyavaḥ* in masculine gender and not *āyūṁṣi* in neuter gender to mean 'men' or 'living beings'. *Āyūṁṣi* is in the plural form of *āyuh anna nāma* (Nigh 2, 7). Secondly, Sarasvati is mainly a goddess of fertility and fecundity as is evident from her characteristics. Various types of food, therefore, is said to be dependent on her, i.e., on her waters. One need not, therefore, go to the extent of reading geological facts into such lines. Again the eulogy of the goddess seems to be a stock-eulogy¹⁹ of a Vedic deity and has nothing to offer for the theory of Dr. Das. So, we may not refute on geological grounds that the Sarasvati's region was rich in human life but the eulogy under reference cannot lead us to or hint at any conclusion in this regard.

In addition to it, the warlike activities on the banks of Sarasvati tend to show that at one time the Sarasvati was a frontier of the Aryans which experienced inroads from the foreigners living just towards its eastern region.

Thus concluding we may say that the beautiful land of the Sarasvati being lovable for many reasons would have infatuated the Vedic Ṛṣis to adopt it as their permanent residence but it cannot be said that it was the original land from where the Aryans spread both towards east and west. In other words we would not challenge that the Sarasvati was the cradleland of the Vedic culture because the activities for the advancement of culture had been springing up there undoubtedly, yet it would be incorrect to take that it was the native land of ancient Aryans.

1. 3, 23, 4. 2. 2, 41, 18. 3. 7, 96, 1. 4. 6, 61, 1.
5. 7, 95, 2. 6. Rgvedic India, pp. 34-35; 57-58. 7. 3, 33, 4.
8. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I Chapter III.
9. IHQ Vol. XXVI, Dec. 1950, No. 4, pp. 320-24. : The Historical Interpretation of the Nadi Stuti Hymn in RV. The nucleus of Dr. Pandey's theory is the assertion 'that when certain things are enumerated, the counting starts from the nearest the most familiar and ends with the most distant and the least known'. He further adds, 'from the order of the rivers given in this Sūkta (10, 75) it is evident that the Ṛṣi of the hymn was though standing on the banks of the Indus, his most familiar and nearest his home, were the

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rivers Ganga and Yamuna'. But Dr. Pandey's view is not convincing because the Rsi named Sindhuksit Pratyamedha starts the *sakta* with a reference to the unparalleled grandeur of the river Sindhu. The *mantra* unmistakably points out that the Rsi does not shower such a praise on the Ganga, Yamuna or any other river as he does on the Sindhu.

10. In 7, 36, 6 we read '*Sarasvati sapta-sindhumata*'; and again in 10, 75, 5 Sarasvati is mentioned as one of the seven major streams. But in 7, 36, 6 the system of seven rivers seems to be different from that of 10, 75, 5.

10. (a) See 8, 54, 4; Khila 3, 6, 4; and also 6, 61, 10; 12 where it is said as '*seven-sistered*', i.e., 'having *Sapta-sindhava*' as its sisters, and *Sapta-dhava* having seven limbs, i.e., having seven rivers as its limbs.'

11. Haridas Bhattacharya : (K. B. Patlak, Comm. Vol. p. 32) points out that there is no doubt that even though the number of sacred streams was fixed at seven, the individual members varied.....

12. 6, 61, 14. 13. 10, 64, 9. 14. 3, 33, 3. 15. 1, 13. Or even if we take that Sarasvati was thought of as motherland by some Vedic Rsis—the authors of the *mantras* glorifying Sarasvati, we cannot say that all Vedic Rsis hailed from the region of Sarasvati because others glorified the region of Vipati, Sutudra and Sindhu also.

17. Rgvedic India, p. 35. Fresh research has been conducted by the geological Department of the Punjab University with the collaboration of the Oslo University. Some of the results have recently been published in the magazine section of the 'Patriot', March 16, 1969.

19. Compare for a corresponding eulogy of Visnu : 'He within whose three wide-extending paces all living creatures have their habitation 1, 154, 2.

SARASVATI IN THE ATHARVAVEDA

CHAPTER II

The concept of a godhead is met with a change in the AV. The benevolent gods and goddesses who were invoked in the RV to grace the sacrifice, or to accept the prayer of the sacrificer, or to give power to perform the sacrifice, or to bestow their blessings and benisons in the form of pelf, prosperity and progeny, or to reward the bounteous and punish the niggardly, are invoked in the AV for the destruction of specific diseases and for the acquisition of peculiar types of profits such as winning the love of a woman¹ or that of a man² or harming the rival in love³, etc.

The popularity of the prayers has been replaced by the spells and the priest exercises influence as a sorcerer and as master of witchcraft. The acts of witchery are sharply detested in the RV, as we see that the charge of a 'magician' is furiously repudiated there⁴. These magic practices are believed to have crept into the Aryan religion when they might have got in touch with the aboriginals. The religion of the AV is 'an amalgam of the elevated Rgvedic religion and the non-elevated religion of the aboriginals of India'. On account of it, one comes across practices which would have characteristically been borne by the poor barbarous aboriginals who are believed to have been worshipping trees and plants, ghosts and goblins, spirits and serpents. But it does not mean that we do not meet in the AV the Rgvedic gods : Agni, Indra and so on; they are quite conspicuous by their presence, however, their character has faded altogether, their original significance as powers of nature is forgotten for the greater part. They hardly differ from one another. Almost all of them have become demonkillers here. Sarasvati is no exception and thus falls into the line of such gods who are believed to have possessed of special healing power or are thought of as scarers of demons and diseases.

1. 3, 25. 2. 6, 130; 131, 138. 3. 1, 14.
4. RV 7, 104. One can, however, locate with a little labour the presence of one or two incantatory verses such as—an incantation against a rival wife or one may find a mocking hymn of exultation after subduing rivals; cf. RV. 10, 145; 159.
5. Dr. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 118.

Invocations to Sarasvatī

Sarasvatī has been invoked and worshipped in the AV for warding off various diseases. It may be pointed out here that there are a number of hymns in the AV which pertain to the magic rites of healing. They are termed as the *Bhaiṣajyāni* according to indigenous terminology. These songs and spells for the healing of diseases are either addressed to diseases imagined as demons or to demons who are considered to be the creators of diseases. Sometimes in such a context an invocation to or praise of the specific curative herb is also made to get the desired benefit. However, a class of such songs also invokes gods and goddesses to ward off the diseases and exercise their majesty to cure them.

In the magic rites of healing (the *Bhaiṣajyāni*) goddess Sarasvatī has been solicited for the killing of worms. The request is made to her along with the dual divinity of Dyāvā-Prṥthivī, with Indra and with Agni, to kill the worms :

Ote me Dyāvā-Prṥthivī otā devī Sarasvatī /
Otau me Indras cāgniśca kṛmīm jambhayatām iti || (5, 23, 1).
(.....May the goddess Sarasvatī be woven warp and woof on the worms for me)¹.

Sarasvatī has also been prayed to for the general welfare (of the infant)².

Along with gods, in general, and with Sūrya, Dyau and Prṥthivī in particular the three Sarasvatis³ have been invoked to bestow the remedy which may be a poison spoiler (*viśadūṣṇam*)⁴. It has been pointed out by a commentator that here the Three Sarasvatis either stand for the three Vedas or the three goddesses Ilā, Sarasvatī and Bhārati, who are called Sarasvatis because of their close association with one another.⁵ This does not seem to be correct because in this context Sarasvatī, the goddess possessed of water with which she could have been supposed to be bestowing a remedy against poison, is more probably mentioned. The *mantra* that follows the above *mantra* also speaks of the remedial role of water as a poison-spoiler. Moreover, from the history of medicine, it seems that Sun, Heaven, Earth, Fire and Water might have been the most primitive curative remedies. Special healing power is ascribed to water, in the AV⁶. Thus it is very likely that the phrase '*Tisraḥ Sarasvatīḥ*' refers here to the three Sarasvatis stationed on earth, atmosphere

and heaven, having water as their chief element⁶. Such a concept of the goddess will then be very near to that of the RV where the goddess has been regarded as stationed in the three regions⁷. It is very likely that Sarasvatī who was supposed to be present in the three regions in olden days would have been spoken of as the three Sarasvatis later on.

Some scholars believe that by the time of the AV, there were three Sarasvatī rivers. Dr. H. D. Griswold⁸ says that the AV 6, 100, 1 might be interpreted to mean that there were three Sarasvatis which are : (i) the earliest Sarasvatī, i.e., the Iranian Haraihvātī (the modern Helmand) beyond Kabul, (ii) possibly the Sindhu, as some scholars think and (iii) the Sarasvatī of the Kurukṣetra region. The context of the *mantra* suggests that the river-goddesses are intent there by the solicitor or sorcerer, for water would be best suited to do away with the effects of poison.

Besides, the variant reading of the Paipp. S. *Sarvāḥ Sarasvatyaḥ* for *Tisraḥ Sarasvatyaḥ* leaves no doubt that the reference is made to the godheads and not to the rivers of different lands.

The preparation of aphrodisiacs, i.e., the remedies to infuse sexual vigour would have been quite popular with the primitive physicians as is known from the AV texts.^{9(a)} In a prayer⁹ Sarasvatī and the gods Agni, Savitr and Brahmanaspati are requested to make the member of a man taut or drawn tight like a bow (probably after the aphrodisiac has been administered to him). Here we would again suggest that in this remedial rite Sarasvatī, with her riverine character, is, in all probability, to be understood in preference to her any other aspect, because Sarasvatī has also been referred to in the YV and in the Brāhmaṇas. in the context of the Sautrāmaṇī, as restoring manly vigour¹⁰.

A class of hymns called '*Āyūṃṣi*' contains prayers for the attainment of longevity which according to the *Sūtras* are offered to the divinities chiefly at family festivals such as tonsure ceremony, the Upanayana, (initiation) A *mantra*^{10(a)} which is reckoned in this class shows that Sarasvatī is also worshipped with the offering of oblations for the attainment of long life in conjunction with other gods¹¹.

Sarasvatī has also been prayed to for providing desideratum (*abhiṣṭaye*) and for protection from distress or sin (*amhasaḥ*) or for protection in general¹², and protection from men of the

mundane sphere (*pāṛthivībhyaḥ*) in particular¹³. By her help Vak is invoked, for defence from all quarters (*ātma-rakṣā*-Anukr.)¹⁴. Prayers to Sarasvatī have also been made for various blessings, such as increase in wealth (*rayi-samvādhana*)¹⁵ or for prosperity in general (*puṣṭikāmaḥ*)¹⁶.

There is a queer prayer made to Sarasvatī by which she is asked to restore (lit. fill up with ghee) in its original form the limb of the body that has been torn apart while speaking with expectation (i. e., because of the apathy on the part of the bounteous or rebuke from the expected donor) or torn apart out of tormentation¹⁷ while going among people begging¹⁸. Such *mantras* are to be classed amongst benedictions (*the Pausikānt*) which are but the songs and spells by which prosperity in general or success in all undertakings is ensured to the sacrificer. In the AV there are numerous benedictions for ploughing, for sowing, for the growth of the corn, and exorcisms, for field-vermin and spells against the danger of fire. In this class of the *mantras* Sarasvatī has once been solicited in a ceremony against injury to grain by lightning. The *mantra* refers to the broad thundering (*pṛithu stanayitnu*), an atmospheric characteristic of the deity¹⁹.

Amulets might have played an important role in the field of exorcism. They did not only ensure health and long life to the wearer but in conjunction with various divinities, they bestowed also the riches, fairness of milk and grain. Sarasvatī has also been associated with an amulet of *Udumbara* for bringing various blessings, to wit, increase in wealth, milk and corn²⁰. Sarasvatī has also been invoked by *Aratindasanam*, 'spells for doing away with nigardiness and its ill-effects'.²¹ From the *Sūtras* and the Anukr. we come to know that the Atharva-vedic prayers to Sarasvatī are also offered in the *Nirikarma*²², 'funeral-rites', *Agni cayana*²³, 'transferring of fire', and in the *Sava-yajñas*²⁴, 'Soma sacrifices'.

In a long hymn (of 75 *mantras*)—applied at the nuptials, the bride is asked to stand firm and is addressed as Virāj. Here follows the request to Sarasvatī and Sinivatī to grant her progeny :

Pratī iṣiḥa Virād asī Viśnur-īveha Sarasvatī |

Sinivatī pra jāyātām bhagasya sumatāvasat || (14, 2, 15.)²⁵
Again, as a part of the marriage ceremony, Sarasvatī is paid homage by the bride when she has worshipped the former fire of the householder. The bride is asked :

Adhā Sarasvatyai nārī pīṛbhyaś ca namaskuru || (14.2.20)²⁷.

Family discord is also thought to be the result of the influence of evil spirits or malicious wizards. Therefore, we find in the AV a number of spells for the restoration of harmony which are known by the name of *Samanasyantī*. This class of *mantras* is to be placed midway between the expiatory formulas and benedictions²⁸. To this class belong, generally, the spells by which peace and harmony are to be restored in the family. A complete hymn is dedicated to the goddess Sarasvatī in which the request, in the last *mantra*, is made to her, along with other deities, to be woven on²⁹ (the sacrificer) for the success in the undertaking (of restoring harmony)³⁰.

Some of these reconciliation-spells are also employed in the restoration of unity between husband and wife. In the Kau. S. the magical rites in which these *mantras* are employed are called *Strī-karmāntī* 'women's rites'. Sarasvatī is one of those deities who are prayed in such a rite known as *Pṛ-tisāñjanam* i. e., winning affection. In a spell (6, 89, 3), Sarasvatī (besides Mitra and Varuṇa etc.) is asked by the husband (referred to in the *mantra* in the first person) to unite his consort (referred to in the *mantra* in the second person) fast with him³¹.

A class of the AV hymns is connected with expiatory ceremonies (*Pṛayaschittāntī*). These expiatory formulas and spells are for cleansing from guilt or sin in the modern sense, i. e., offences against the moral rule or transgression against religion. Or these hymns are propitiatory formulas for imperfectly performed sacrifices and ceremonies, for sins of thought, etc. Sarasvatī has once been invoked along with the Viśvedevāḥ and Bṛhaspati to mend the lapses of mind and speech on the sacrifice³².

There are a very few *mantras* in the AV which are in their spirit akin to the Rgvedic prayers. In case of the goddess Sarasvatī, we may quote at least three such prayers :

Sarasvatī vrāteṣu te divyeṣu devī dhāmasu |

Jusasya havyam āhitam prajāṁ devī rarasva nah || (7, 70, 1.)

Idam te havyam ghṛitavai Sarasvatīdam pīṇam havir asyam vai |

Imānti te uditā samitāmānti tebhir vayam naddhūmantāḥ syāma || (7, 70, 2)

Siva nah Samitāmā bhava sūmṛīkṣa Sarasvatī |

Mā te yuyoma samdīśaḥ || (7, 71, 1)

In the first *mantra* the sacrificers say that 'they are in her ordinances (*vrataṣu*)³³, i. e., they are acting according to her injunctions'; and they abide by her celestial laws (*divyeṣu dhāmasu*)³⁴. They ardently solicit her to associate (i. e., accept) their oblations and in return they ask her to grant them progeny³⁵. 'The imploration to the deity to enjoy the offered oblation and in return ask for the grant of offspring' is a typical Rgvedic prayer.

In the second *mantra*, the oblations assigned to her are said to give pleasure and happiness (*śantamāni*), through which the sacrificers wish to be replete with sweet savour.

The ardent aspiration of the worshipper—'not to be separated from the sight of the goddess Sarasvatī' reminds us of the Rgvedic prayer 6, 61, 14 where the devotees of the goddess ask her not to cast them away to far off lands. The Atharvavedic prayer quoted above—*Śivā naḥ*, etc. (7, 71, 1) is pregnant with the request for bestowing manifold boons which are substantive and abstract in their extent and nature. Here *śantamā* 'most beneficent' and *sumṛḍṭkā*, 'very compassionate' the two epithets of Sarasvatī suggest the series of pleasant things being bestowed by her.

1. Though the lit. meaning is: 'The goddess Sarasvatī is woven etc., these words contain the entreaty of the solicitor.
The action of the goddess has been alluded to by the word *otā*—*ā*+*ve*+*ktā*, feminine and by the root *√jambh* < *√jabh*. Whitney has translated this word as 'worked in' and Sāyaṇa in his commentary of another *mantra* of the AV (6, 94, 3) explains it: *Asmad ābhimukhyena sambaddhā*; explaining the word *sambaddhā* he further adds in the context of the last *pāda* of the *mantra*—*Sambaddhau paraspāra-protau vā eka-kāryodyuktāu*. His words seem to allude that he sensed the word *otā* as meaning 'zealously active' and thus his words *asmad ābhimukhyena sambaddhā* would mean 'zealously active towards us'. But the intrinsic sense of the word has not been conveyed by both the translations. It is suggested here that the original sense of the word *otā* should be retained here i. e. 'the act of weaving on from all sides'. Sarasvatī is requested here to check the growth of the worms that is grind or pound them, as is alluded to by the verb *√jambhayaṁ*. For this act of arresting their ill-effect, she is requested to be woven warp and woof (*otā*) that is cast a fastened net to crush them.
This hymn of the Rsi, Kaṇva has been used by the Kauśika Sūtra (29, 20) in a healing ceremony against worms.
2. 7, 11, 1 (=RV 1, 164, 49 with a little variation).
It has *pāda* order a, c, b, d. RV reads in 'a' *śaiṣayas*; and in

'b' (its c) *ratnadhā vasuvid* (for *sumnayaḥ suhavo*). The comm. reads *śaiṣayas* in 'a', explaining it as either 'causing the prosperity of (its) young one (*śiṣu*) or hidden (*nigūḍha*)'.

The Kauśika-sūtra (32, 1), in the chapter of remedies, has it accompanying the suckling of a child seized by the demon Jambha. Whitney has suggested that it is perhaps applied in the remedy for a child 'suffering from dentition'.

From this *mantra* we can fairly guess the tendency of secondary adaptation of *mantras* to incongruous ritual uses which can be illustrated more vividly by the help of the *Sūtra*-texts. This secondary association of a given *mantra* with a given practice has often been determined by some most superficial semblance of verbal pertinence in the *mantra* or the like, when in fact, the *mantra* had no intrinsic and essential pertinence to the practice whatsoever. The mere presence of the words *stana*, 'breast,' and the solicitation of suckling etc. has led the author of the *Sūtra* to think of it as a *mantra* for remedy for a young one being suckled by one's mother. The corrupt reading of '*śaiṣayas*' for Rgvedic *śaiṣayas* would have also helped the *sūtrakāra* to fortify his said belief. It is with this purpose and mind that the comm. explains *śaiṣayas*, 'causing the prosperity of its young one (*śiṣu*)'.

3. Paipp. S has *sarvāḥ Sarasvatyaḥ*, 'all the Sarasvatīs'.
4. This prayer (AV 6, 100, 1), according to the Kau. Sū. (31, 26) is applied in a remedial rite against various poisons, with aid of earth from an anthill etc.
5. Sāyaṇa: *Tisraḥ trisaṁkhyāḥ Sarasvatīḥ Sarasvatyaḥ trayirūpāḥ*; *Tadvā Idā Sarasvatī Bhārati-ti Tisro Denyaḥ saḥacaryyāt Sarasvatya ucyanṭe*.
6. Winternitz, Hist. of Ind. Lit. Vol. 1, p. 129.
7. *Triṣṭhasthā*; RV 6, 61, 12. The only difference which is noticed out of comparison is that the Rgvedic reference says that one Sarasvatī is stationed in the three regions while in the AV reference means that they are three in number. In the case of the Gaṅgā this concept is more precise because there we get three separate names of the Tripathagā (=Gaṅgā, flowing in three regions), the Mandākinī (flowing in heaven), the Bhāgirathī (flowing on earth), and the Bhogavati (flowing in the nether-region). Hence we can say that the doctrine of the three Sarasvatīs is an anticipation of the later doctrine of three Gaṅgās.
8. Op cit. p. 303, note 6. 8 (a) 4, 4. 9. 4, 4, 6. Acc. to the Kau. S. (40, 14) it is to be applied in the *vajikarāṇa*, the rite for sexual vigour. Sāyaṇa's logic (vide his comm.) that the word *devī* prefixed with *Sarasvatī* is to differentiate the goddess from its river-nature does not seem to be correct, because we have seen that *Sarasvatī* has been prayed many a time in the RV as the river-goddess.
10. See under '*Sarasvatī's Role in the Sautiāmaṇi*'. 10 (1) 6, 41, 2.
11. (i) Also the words '*Mā no hāsiṣur...../.....āyur dhatta pratarāṁ jīvaṣe naḥ* ||' contained in the *mantra* that follows the one under context, alludes that the offerings for the attainment of long life are made to the divinities referred to in our *mantra*. (ii) Acc. to Kau. S. (54, 11) this *mantra* is applied in the context of the *Godāna*.

12. 6, 3, 2—we should take 'abhiṣṭaye' and 'amhasat' as being connected with Sarasvatī and Dyāvā-Pṛthivī also. Cf. Mat. S. (4, 14), 17. In such prayers Sarasvatī seems to be prayed in her concept of Speech, holding her sway on speech.
13. 16, 4, 4, 14, 5, 10, 8, 15, 3, 20, 7. Kau. S. 41, 8 applies it in a rite for winning wealth.
17. 7, 59, 1. Sayāna: *yajña-pratigṛhīteṇa-bharīṣanābhāratā-divyā-āṅgam* *īṣṭaphala-prāpya-bhāvaṇa-paryākulām asti*.....
18. In Kau. S. 46, 6 it is joined with AV 5, 7, 5 in a rite for success at the time of asking for something.
19. 7, 12, 1. Kau. S. 38, 8 uses the *mantra* as a prayer to Sarasvatī in a ceremony against the ill effect of lightning (on the corn of the crops). The comm. takes it as a prayer to the god Parjanya but it is applied by the Kau. S. as Sayāna tells us, at a ceremony for entrance into the Vedic studies (*Upanayana* or *Upekarmāna*—Sayāna); this also alludes beside Anukr. to the fact that the *mantra* is a *Saravati*.
20. AV 19, 31, 9; 10, 21, 5, 7, 4; acc. to Anukr.
22. Kau. S. (18, 13) prescribes AV 3, 20, 7 in this context.
23. Sayāna quoting Kau. S. says that the *mantra* 6, 100, 1—a prayer to Sarasvatī to give the poison-spoiler remedy, is to be applied when the sacrificial cake is laid on the breast of a deceased sacrificer on the funeral pile.
24. Kau. S. 29, 19—prescribes AV 3, 20, 7 in this context.
25. Kau. S. 66, 2—prescribes AV 5, 10, 8 in this context.
26. 'Sarasvatī' (in vocative) suggested that the bride has been addressed by this name; but in paraphrase we may also connect 'Sarasvatī' with 'Siniṣālī', in the following *pāda*, because Sarasvatī and Siniṣālī, since RV (10, 184, 2) are prayed together to grant progeny to the worshipper. It is to be noted that Sarasvatī has been paid homage and by her side the Fathers are also paid homage. Their association with Sarasvatī is in continuation of the Rgvedic traditions.
28. Winternitz, op. cit., p. 138.
29. The word *at* has been discussed above. Here by his words the sacrificer very probably solicits Sarasvatī to circumambulate him for general well-being and success in his undertaking to cultivate the covered concord. Sayāna regards it as intended by Kau. S. (12, 5) in a rite for harmony. The first two verses of the hymn of course, do not refer to any characteristic of Sarasvatī.
30. 6, 94, 3.
31. Sayāna regards it i. e., the complete hymn with three verses, as intended by Kau. S. (36, 10, 11) in a women's rite, for winning affection, addressing the head and ear, or wearing the hair, of the person to be affected. Whitney, however, tells us that the Berlin ms. adds 'manyundāsam'—i. e., the hymn is to be employed for pacifying the wrath. Many *mantras* in this class of reconciliation-spells are employed for appeasing the wrath of a great master and etc. (Cf. Winternitz, op. cit., p. 138-39). Thus Sarasvatī would have been prayed for allaying the anger of masters).
32. This very prayer, according to the AV Parīśiṣṭha 37, 4, 1-2 is applied in a ceremony of expiation for the loss of a strainer and again in 37, 14

- in the rite of expiation, in case a certain earthen vessel being carried during the sacrifice falls from the hand of the sacrificer (See the comm. on 19, 40, 1 in the Poona edn. of the AV Shankara Pāṇḍurāga Pāṇḍita).
33. *Vra* stands for 'ordenance'; Cf. Uśas does not infringe the heavenly ordinances (*dayāni vṛānti*-RV 1, 92, 12).
34. *Dhama* stands for 'law'; Cf. Uśas does not transgress the law of *Rita* (*Ritasya dhama*.....RV 1, 123, 9)
35. Sayāna renders *divyeṣu dhāmāsu* as 'in the fire-altars designed for the deities—Garbhapatya and etc.' (*divi bhāveṣu devārṇheṣu va dhāmāsu śiḥaṇeṣu Garbhapatyādīrṇheṣu*) and paraphrases these locatives with the past passive participle *dhūtam*. This interpretation of Sayāna though not unconvincing, yet seem to be a belaboured one and is not as natural as the one given above.

Sarasvatī's Association with Other Gods

In almost all spells and songs of the AV, Sarasvatī has been shown as exercising her influence or prayed to exercise her influence in conjunction with various other divinities, prominent amongst whom are Heaven and Earth, Indra, Agni and the Fathers, though Savitṛ, Surya, Siniṣālī, Brahmanāspati, Viśve-devāḥ, Viṣṇu, Mātṛiṣvan, Manas, Bhṛat, Anumatī, Bhaga, Sarta, Pṛāṇa, and Apāna, Vyāna, Srotra, Cakṣus, Vak, the Maruts, Soma, Mitra and Varuṇa, Antarikṣa, Bṛhaspati, Yama and Grāva are also spoken of along with her. In the act of restoration of sexual energy, she is associated with Agni, Savitṛ and Brahmanāspati.¹ In a rite against nigardiness, she is invoked along with Anumatī, Bhaga, and Vak.² She is spoken of with Bhṛat, Manas, Mātṛiṣvan, Pṛāṇa and Apāna, Surya, Cakṣus, Antarikṣa, Srotra, Pṛithivī, Sarta and Vak in a prayer for defence from all quarters.³ She is mentioned with Apāna, Vyāna and Pṛāṇa for attaining long life.⁴ She is associated with Heaven and Earth, Indra and Agni in the act of killing the worms⁵ and again with them in the rite of creating harmony.⁶ In a rite for *Pṛiti-samjananam* (winning affection) a request has been made to her along with Mitra and Varuṇa.⁷ The three Sarasvatīs are asked to bestow a remedy against poison.⁸ She has been conjointly requested with Heaven and Earth, Grāva, Soma and Agni for fulfilling ambition and for protecting against sin or distress.⁹ Sarasvatī's association with Pits is quite manifest in the RV also.¹⁰ In a few *mantras*¹¹ which are reckoned amongst the Funeral verses and are employed in the *Pitṛvedha*-sacrifice,¹² Sarasvatī also is offered an oblation, while another one is

offered to the Pitr̥s.¹³ In the Nuptials also, Sarasvatī is to be paid salutations by the side of the Pitr̥s by the bride.¹⁴

In the Nuptials Sarasvatī has also been associated with Viṣṇu and with Sinvālī in this context, she is requested to bestow progeny on the sacrificer.¹⁵ With Sinvālī again and with an amulet of *Udumbara*, Sarasvatī is requested to bless the sacrificer with wealth.¹⁶ In conjunction with Viśvedevāḥ and Bṛhaspati she mends a defect or lapse on the part of sacrificer in uttering wrong words or keeping ill-thoughts in the mind.¹⁷ To ward off affliction coming from sky, earth, atmosphere, men and the (other) mundane beings, Sūrya, Agni, Vāyu, Yama and Sarasvatī, respectively, have been requested together.¹⁸

As in the R̥V, Sarasvatī in the AV also forms a trio with Ilā and Bhārati in the Āprī hymns.¹⁹ The usual prayer of asking the goddesses to sit upon the pleasant (*syonam*) sacred grass is made in the AV also in almost the same phraseology as we have in the R̥V; however, we have here 'manuṣyad-īha cetayanti?' for R̥gvedic 'manuṣyavad-īha cetayanti?' and also *Sarasvatīḥ* for R̥gvedic *Sarasvatī*.²⁰

1. 4, 4, 6. 2. 5, 7, 4. 3. 5, 10, 8. 4. 6, 41, 2. 5. 5, 23, 1.
6. 6, 94, 3. 7. 6, 89, 3. 8. 6, 100, 1. 9. 6, 3, 2. 10. See R̥V. 10, 17, 7; 8; 9. 11. 1, 41-43. The text of these *mantras* is almost the same as that of the R̥gvedic verses mentioned in note 10.
12. Kau. S. 81, 39. 13. 7, 70, 2. 14. 14, 2, 20. 15. 14, 2, 15.
16. 19, 31, 10. 17. 19, 40, 1. 18. 16, 4, 4. 19. 5, 12; 27. 20. 5, 12, 8; RV. 10, 110, 8. Here 'manuṣyat' stands for 'manuṣyavat' vide Prāt. 4, 65. Whitney says that reading *Sarasvatīḥ* can hardly be anything but a blunder, because the Taitt. Br. alone supports the AV in reading 'Sarasvatīḥ' and the R̥V, the VS and the Mait. S. are one in reading 'Sarasvatī' here. However one may suggest that all the three goddess are said here as 'Sarasvatīs', therefore, reading 'Sarasvatīḥ' here will be in apposition with the word 'Tisrah Sarasvatīḥ' = Paipp. S. 'Sarovāḥ Sarasvatīḥ'—6, 100, 1.

Sarasvat, the Consort of Sarasvatī

In the AV some colour is added to the R̥gvedic portrait of Sarasvatī who is though mentioned in only four *mantras* of this Saṁhitā. First is AV 7, 40 which is identical to R̥V 1, 164, 52; save the last *pāda* which reads :

Ā no goṣṭhe rayiṣṭhām sthāpayāti ||

Sāyana supplies here Indra as a subject for the concluding verb and thus the translation of this *pāda* will be: 'May Indra establish him (Sarasvat) who is stationed in a prosperous land (*rayiṣṭhām-dhanavati pradēṣe tiṣṭhantam*) in our cow-stall'. Since Indra is the chief amongst atmospheric gods who are mainly connected with the downpour, it will not be incorrect to think with Sāyana that

Indra would have exercised his influence on Sarasvatī, who on account of his attributes in the first three *pādas* of the *mantra* is to be classed among the atmospheric deities.¹ Indra's connection with Sarasvatī has again been alluded to when with both of them the deified Bull has been equated.² Two other *mantras*³ which are both invocative and oblational in nature speak of somewhat vividly about Sarasvatī. In the first one we are told that his injunction (*vrata*)⁴ is carried out by all the animals (and men⁵); in his control stand the waters; he exercises his sway on the lord of prosperity (*Puṣṭipatiḥ*)⁶; he, Sarasvatī as such, is called upon for aid.⁷ In the second *mantra* it has been said about Sarasvatī that he is called by the sacrificers at the sacrificial rite; he fulfils the pined ambition of the donor (i. e., bountiful sacrificer); he is lord of the prosperous (*puṣṭa* : well-fed and well-nurtured); he is stationed at the abode of wealth; he increases wealth and he is himself the seat of wealth.⁸

1. The Kau. S. (24, 9) also employs it in a rite for prosperity with offering to Indra of the omentum of a best bull; the verse is reckoned to the 'paṣṭika *mantras*'.
2. AV 9, 4, 9: *toam (Vṛṣabham) Indram toam Sarasvantamāhuḥ*. 3. 7, 41, 1; 2.
4. Sāyana translates '*vrata*' as '*karma*'. For rendering of '*vrata*' as injunction or ordinance, one may compare R̥V 1, 92, 12: Uṣas does not infringe the heavenly ordinances (*daivyaṇi vratāni*).
5. Man is the first and strongest of the animals—ŚBr. 7, 5, 2, 6.
6. May we think that '*Puṣṭipatiḥ*' here stands for Sarasvatī? For, Sarasvatī has been identified with '*Puṣṭipati*' in the ŚBr. 11, 4, 3, 16 and in the Taitt. Br. 2, 5, 7, 4 she is said as '*Puṣṭipatni*'.
7. *Tasya vratam paśavo yanti sarve*
yasya vrata upatiṣṭhanta āpaḥ |
Tasya vrata puṣṭipatir niviṣṭas tam
Sarasvantam avase hacāmāhe ||
8. *Ā pratyāñcam dāṣuṣe dāṣvainsam*
Sarasvantam puṣṭipatim rayiṣṭhām |
Rāyas-poṣam śrausyaṁ vāsānā.
iha huema sadanam rayinām ||
This *sūkta* has been quoted by the Vaitāna S. 8, 2 with hymn 7, 70 for accompanying offerings to Sarasvatī and Sarasvatī at the full moon sacrifice. Whitney, quoting Aufrecht says that this *sūkta* is a supplement to R̥V 7, 96 which delineates the personality of god Sarasvatī.

Sarasvatī and Vāk

The association of the goddess Sarasvatī with Vāk, Speech Divine seems to be in a developed form in the AV. It seems as if the identification of the two would have been effected by

the time of these *mantras*. The identification of Sarasvatī with Vak is the result of a phased development in their relationship. These *mantras* of the AV then would not have been anterior to some of the Brāhmaṇa references which allude to a more antique phase of development in the process of identification of Sarasvatī and Vak. For, first of all, the identification of river-goddess Sarasvatī with Vak, Speech Divine (i. e. in the form of Vedic *mantras*), would have occurred; as a result of this identification the river-goddess would have come to be regarded as exercising her influence on the field of letters.¹ Since letters are born of speech and again Speech Divine, the Vedic *mantras* are uttered in specific articulation, the device of speech, i. e., mouth and tongue and the articulate sounds coming out of them, was regarded as being under the influence of Sarasvatī/Vak. In the AV, we do not come across the riverine character of the goddess Sarasvatī where she has been associated or identified with Vak (both divine and mundane). Therefore, this phase of development which we meet with in the AV is to be placed after the Brahmanic phase which alludes to the identification of the river-goddess Sarasvatī with Vak, Divine Speech in form of Vedic *mantras*. However, this cannot mean that these *mantras* of the AV do not play any role to effect identification of Sarasvatī and Vak or that they with all certainly presuppose the existence of the identification of Sarasvatī and Vak. For, we see that Vak in her own right is a deity in the AV. For example, we may quote that Vak is the rim of the god-chariot; she is identified with Virāj; her association with Prajāpati² and Uśas³ has been referred to in the Samhitā. She is spoken of as most exalted (*parameśhīntī*), the divine one, eulogized by *brahman* (i. e., prayer) (*brahma-samhitā*) who is responsible for producing what is terrible, therefore, it is through her that appeasement for the sacrificers is sought⁴. But in a reference or two the meaningful association of Vak with the goddess Sarasvatī can very clearly be seen. When for defence from all quarters, Mind, Prāṇa and Āpāna, Eye, Ear, Body, and Speech come to be regarded as deities in the AV they were shown as summoned through different divinities, perhaps to confirm their deified character; it was through Sarasvatī there that the Vak was called on :

Sarasvatya vacam upāhvayāmahe manoyujā (5, 10, 8).

It is, perhaps, for her close association with Vak that Sarasvatī

has been called as mind-yoked. Mind-yoked Sarasvatī, very probably means the deified unuttered speech, that precedes the actual utterance. This interpretation is further substantiated by the following prayer :

Yam yācāmyaham vacā Sarasvatya manoyujā |

Śradhā tamadaya vindatu.....//-(5, 7, 4.)

(Whomsoever I pray to through Sarasvatī, the mind-yoked speech, i. e., the unuttered speech, him may faith find today).

The term Vak-Sarasvatī, according to Sayana⁵, is used to impress upon the deified characteristic of Vak, that is, to differentiate Her from vak, 'the ordinary speech'. This shows that the identification of Sarasvatī with Vak then would have been a recent happening for which the two are spoken of together in a term like Vak-Sarasvatī. When once their identification was established the word Sarasvatī for Vak, Speech Divine, would have come to be applied⁶. The substitution of Vata in the AV *mantra* 3, 20, 7 for the ancient⁷ R̥gvedic Vak may lead us to suppose that when the identification of Sarasvatī with Vak might have been effected, the word Vak was thought spurious and hence dropped because Sarasvatī was then thought of as combining in her person the characteristics of Vak and the word *vātam* was inserted in place of the word *vācam* which would not have presented any metrical difficulty. We may also mention here that the epithet *urū-vyak*, 'wide extending' of the goddess Sarasvatī suits well in her aspect of Speech. For her pervading nature Sarasvatī, the Speech, has been called '*Uru-vak*'. (The pervading nature of Vak has often been mentioned in the Vedas. Cf. *Yāvad Brāhma vijñitām iva* vak 'Vak extends as far as Brāhma'-RV 10, 114, 8.)

We have mentioned above that as a result of this identification, Sarasvatī came to be thought of as one exercising her influence on the device of speech or articulate sound, that is, mind, mouth and tongue. It is, therefore, thought that whenever there is a lapse on the part of a person by speaking defective words or by having ill-thoughts in the mind, the goddess Sarasvatī becomes angry¹⁰. The prayer.....*abhisīyate amhasa* | *Pāu no devī subhagā Sarasvatī*.....// (6, 3, 2) is probably made to Sarasvatī in her concept as Vak, i. e. keeping in view her influence on the vocal region. Here '*amhas*' in all probability, is to be taken as 'a lapse or sin committed by way of speech,' the basis of such a probability is a similar prayer contained in

the Maitt. S. 4, 14, 17¹¹. Thus the *amhas* in the Atharvavedic prayer may also mean, 'the sin committed by uttering false speech (*anṛta*).'

We may point out here, however, that Sāyaṇa's assertion based on the Kau. S. that the Sārasvata Sūkta consisting of a single *mantra* i. e., 7, 12, 1, was applied in the rites of entrance upon Vedic study (*upākarmaṇ*), does not warrant that Sarasvatī had come to be regarded as the deity dispensing Vedic learning in the AV because the text of the *mantra* has little bearing on the subject of study, learning, etc.¹².

But concluding, we must say that the AV has also contributed in its own way to the conceptual development of Sarasvatī/Vāk, because a few references have a bearing on the identification of Sarasvatī with Vāk, as we have seen.

1. See supra p. 66. 2. 8, 8, 22. 3. 10, 24. 4. 9, 1, 10; 20.
5. 16, 6, 5. 6. 19, 9, 3. 7. Vide comm. on Taitt. Ār. 4, 5, 1.
8. After their complete identification the reverse is also possible, that is, the word 'Vāk'/'Vānī' for 'Sarasvatī' came to be applied. We shall see below many such contexts in the Rām. Mbh. and the Purāṇas.
9. Because the *mantra* is identical with RV 10, 141, 5 i. e., the AV reads—*Vātaṁ Viṣṇuṁ Sarasvatīm* etc. while the RV reads *Vācaṁ Viṣṇuṁ Sarasvatīm* etc.
10. AV 19, 40, 1 : *Yan me chidraṁ manaso yac ca vācaḥ*
Sarasvatī manyumantam jagāma |
Sāyaṇa says that 'manyumantam' stands here for 'manyumatīm' on account of the reversion of gender.
11. *Rtena Dyāvā-Prthivī rtena tvam Sarasvatī |*
Kṛtannaḥ pāthy-amhaso yat kīṇcā-ṛtamaḍima ||
Rtena Dyāvā-Prthivī Rtena tvam Sarasvatī |
Rtān mā muñcatāmhasaḥ Tad-anyakṛta mārīma ||
The text is identical with Taitt. Br. 3; 4, 12, 2 and Taitt. Ār. 2, 3, 1.
12. The Sūkta being Sārasvata seems to have been fitted later on in such a ceremony as *upākarmaṇ* or *upanayana*, without keeping in view the gist of the text.

The Sarasvatī

Some scholars believe that by the time of the AV there were three rivers known by the same name Sarasvatī, which according to them are referred to in 6, 100, 1. We have examined their view-point and do not believe that in such a reference the river is intended by the solicitor.¹

The region watered by the Sarasvatī continued to be held as sacred for sacrificial purposes. It is alluded to in 6, 30, 1. From this we come to know that on the banks of the Sarasvatī,

the gods first ploughed and sowed honeyed barley, on behalf of mankind (i. e., for the benefit of mankind). Indra in this act was the presiding deity of the plough and the Maruts were the ploughmen². In the RV we have seen that Sarasvatī, in her atmospheric aspect is associated with Indra and the Maruts—the two main divinities known for their activities in the atmospheric region. Here the same divinities are associated with the river Sarasvatī. This *mantra* suggests that on the banks of the Sarasvatī, the gods were the first to perform the act of a Vaiśya also, though in olden days they were engaged in acts peculiar to those of priests and warriors alone. Or in other words, the *mantra* under reference alludes to the fact that the region of the Sarasvatī was the first to see the dawn of agricultural civilization.

(Such a glorification of the region of Sarasvatī was the background of Epic and Puranic thought that the universe or three regions were originated by the procreator in the region watered by the holy Sarasvatī and thus in the Mbh.³ we read that, Brahmā started the procreation in this region. In the Vāmana-Purāṇa⁴, too we find that Indra and other gods associate and bless Kuru on the banks of Sarasvatī for carrying on his act of truthfulness, penance, compassion, purity, charity, yoga and continence or sense-restraint).

1. See supra p. 73. 2. Sāyaṇa : *Kīṇcāḥ karṣakāḥ*. 3. 9, 38, 36; 39, 35; 47, 22-23 4. 22, 24 ff.

Āśvamedha, Sarasvatī is invoked to grant felicity¹². In the Sarvamedha sacrifice, the goddess is invoked to associate¹³. Libations of milk are offered to her along with the Āśvins and Indra in the Pravarṅya ceremony¹⁴.

Sarasvatī's Role in the Sautrāmaṇī

Sarasvatī is oft-quoted in the context of the Sautrāmaṇī which is a voluntary sacrificial ceremony (*Kāmyayajña*) performed by the Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣītriyas and the Vaiśyas, wanting to attain distinction in their respective life-stations. Sarasvatī is offered oblations and partakes of libations of *sura* 'liquor' blended with Soma or sometimes those blended with the marrow of animals in this sacrifice. She is also referred to in many of the prayers belonging to this sacrifice which refer to the legend of Indra, who was indisposed through intoxication from excessive enjoyment of Soma and had to be cured by the Āśvins and by Sarasvatī.

The remedial-sacrifice ('*Bheṣaja-yajña*') to heal Indra was arranged by gods¹; though almost all major deities, viz., Agni, Varuṇa, Maruṭs, Bhaga, Ūsas, Savitṛ and others are associated with this *yajña*², the major role was played by the Āśvins and Sarasvatī who healed Indra by virtue of their leech-craft. Healing Indra or fashioning his form afresh was mainly a joint venture of the Āśvins and Sarasvatī, as we read that Indra's medicine (*āhindra bheṣajam*) was milked³ for Indra by Sarasvatī and the Āśvins. Sarasvatī and Āśvins jointly effused immortal Indu (drop) from pressed and unpressed Soma which was the splendour of animals (victims) (*ṛjoh paśūnam*) etc. (for the welfare of Indra)⁴. Both of the divinities are said as restoring vigour (*Indriyam vryam*-Mabidhara) to Indra⁵. Both give *Māsa*, *Parisru* and honey (*maddu*) to Indra⁶. Gandabhai G. Desai⁷ says that 'the body of Indra is perfected by the Āśvins for his soul to operate upon and his soul is perfected by Sarasvatī to utilize that body for appropriate actions.' But this does not seem to be true, because we observe from a number of references that though Sarasvatī at one or two places is entrusted with the

SARASVATĪ IN THE YAJURVEDA

CHAPTER III

Offerings to Sarasvatī in various Ceremonies of the YV.

The YV¹ is a book of prayers and formulae to be uttered by the priest at various sacrifices. The goddess Sarasvatī has been mentioned in the context of almost all the sacrifices contained in the YV. In the Darśapūrṇamāsa (the New and Full Moon sacrifices) Sarasvatī is offered an oblation along with Agni². In the Soma-sacrifices she is offered an oblation along with Pusan and Agni³. In the prayers of the Soma sacrifices also, Sarasvatī is mentioned as one of the sacrificial names of the cow⁴. In the Vajapeya and Rājāsūya sacrifices, Sarasvatī is one of those deities who are prayed to and offered oblations for the furthering of strength (*vajaprasavanīya*)⁵. At the *abhiṣeka*, 'consecration' in the Rājāsūya, after the *Adhvaryu* (priest) has spread *carma* (tiger's skin), offerings of ghee are offered to twelve gods, Sarasvatī is included among them⁶. In the Caraka Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice which is a part of the Rājāsūya, Sarasvatī, along with the Āśvins and Indra, is offered libations of *sura*, 'liquor'. In the Daśapeya sacrifice Sarasvatī is mentioned as one of those deities who urge the priest in the *mantra* which is read by each of the priest at the time of offering the *samstpa* oblation⁸. Here Sarasvatī is also a recipient of an *ardhendra* oblation-the twelve oblations of this kind (called *vasor dharikāni yajum*-oblations to infuse wealth or glory—Mabidhara) are offered with twelve *mantras* to twelve deities, each of whom is coupled with Indra. In the Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice, the exegesis of which occurs in three books 19-21, Sarasvatī along with the Āśvins and Indra is prayed and offered *sura* libation. In the Āśvamedha when the horse is let loose, an un-interrupted series of prescribed ceremonies is performed at the sacrificer's home during the absence of the horse. *Audgrabhāna* oblations are offered and homage is paid to various deities. Sarasvatī is one of them, the other being Ka (Prajāpati), Aditi, Viṣṇu, Pusan, Tvasitṛ and others⁹. Offerings of quadruped animals and those of birds are also made to Sarasvatī in the context of the Āśvamedha¹⁰. She also partakes at least of two oblations of the sacrificed-horse in the Āśvamedha¹¹. In the prayers made to various deities in the context of the

infusion of vital airs into Indra by *vyāna*, (through-breath)⁸ and by *prāṇa* she is said to have restored manly vigour to Indra⁹, she is equally related to the modelling of the body and limbs of Indra along with the *Aśvins*.¹⁰ Both stood for the mouth of Indra.¹¹ Besides, Indra's inner shape (*peśo Sntaram*)-is modelled by both the divinities, the *Aśvins* and *Sarasvatī*.¹² Though in some references *Sarasvatī* is said as restoring some particular things to Indra and the *Aśvins* are doing the other ones¹³, it cannot be concluded from these references that *Sarasvatī* perfected only the inner-recesses of Indra. The most difficult task of carrying Indra in womb was also undertaken by *Sarasvatī*.¹⁴ That is, she framed his both inner and outer forms. At other places such acts as pouring out Soma for Indra etc. are said to have been performed jointly by *Sarasvatī* and the *Aśvins*.¹⁵

It is said *Sarasvatī* treated Indra by her speech; therefore, the goddess came to be identified with *Vāk*.¹⁶ No doubt *Sarasvatī* treated Indra by her *vāk*, 'speech'¹⁷ but she also treated Indra by her thought¹⁸ and by *barhis*¹⁹ (sacred grass) and also kept Indra in her womb for recreating him. So, *vāk* 'speech', was not the only instrument of *Sarasvatī* to treat Indra. Again *vācā* seems to be instrumental to both *Sarasvatī* and the *Aśvins* and it stands in general sense for the Vedic *mantras* which would have been applied in the *bheṣaja yajña* by all the gods combinedly.²⁰ It is indicated that *Sarasvatī* came to be identified with *Vāk* (the Vedic lore) not because of its application by her in the *bheṣaja yajña* but because of the continuous association of *Vāk* with the river *Sarasvatī*. Hence *Sarasvatī* though treated Indra by her *vāk*, we may not say that she came to be identified with *Vāk* on this reason. Had she come to be identified with *Vāk* on account of it, she would have been also identified with *Manas*, *Barhis* and others.²¹

What would have been the nature of *vāk* with which Indra was treated by *Sarasvatī*? This *vāk* was certainly not the thunderbolt, a weapon which *Sarasvatī*, in the form of an atmospheric deity, is supposed to be possessing; because, in the context, *Sarasvatī* is associated with the *Aśvins*, who are mentioned nowhere in the *Saṃhitās* undertaking any venture of war or duel, though they have been providing diverse boons to man. Here also both the *Aśvins* and *Sarasvatī* are said to have brought Soma from *Namuci* for Indra by virtue of their wit (*dhiyā*).²² Moreover, *Sarasvatī* is said as performing the role of a physician

and as such her *vāk* speech, would have been that of a physician. Did she speak pleasant words of a physician to soothe Indra pleading him to endure the malady? The answer is, perhaps, 'No.' It was known to all that Indra had inherent and innate prowess which was lost by him in an unconscious disposition. The treatment of his malady lay, therefore, in digging out his dormant dauntlessness. It seems that *Sarasvatī* as a psychiatrist, the physician of mental diseases, shook Indra to his senses²³ and reminded him of his previous valiant deeds reciting the ballads written in his honour.²⁴ It is thus that *Sarasvatī* might have infused afresh might and manly vigour (*vīrya-pūṃstva*) in Indra by awakening in fact his qualities lying latent in the inner recesses of his mind.²⁵ The bull, an emblem of might was sacrificed to him and thus the lion was reminded of his legendary valiance.²⁶ Thus *Sarasvatī* with the *Aśvins* injected into Indra the powers both mental and manual, through her sacrificial speech.²⁷ By *Vaṣaṭ* calls, *Sarasvatī*, in conjunction with other gods, bestowed on Indra brilliant light and power and implanted wisdom in his heart.²⁸ In this way the *Aśvins* and *Sarasvatī* definitely enjoyed the credit of strengthening Indra through sacrifice²⁹ by virtue of which the latter cleft *Vala* and killed *Namuci* to win back the wealth (and waters for humanity).³⁰ But at the same time, this act of intrepidity to kill the fierce foe is said to have been effected by Indra himself and that too, by virtue of the *vāk* of *Sarasvatī* which had given him manly vigour with breath³¹. That the *vāk* of *Sarasvatī* would have worked to instigate Indra to smite at his foe is also indicated in 21, 39; 57 where *Sarasvatī* is said as providing Indra with the wrath (*bhāma* and *manyu*) and power. Thus it seems that the *vāk* of *Sarasvatī* was no doubt the Vedic lore, the one pertaining to the ballads of Indra³². It reminded Indra of his previous valiant ventures and inspired into the hero the wrath and self-spiritedness by virtue of which he regained his lost power. The Oriental scholiasts take *Sarasvatī* here as *Vāgdevī*³³. Prof. Weber suggests (what Griffith calls the rationalistic explanation³⁴) that *Sarasvatī* the river, that is, cold water is referred to here³⁵. Neither of the two views seems to be correct in this context³⁶. The identification of *Sarasvatī* with *Vāk* (deified speech) seems to be in the process of being effected in the YV because *vāk* is still an instrument of *Sarasvatī* with which she is curing Indra³⁷. And that, too, is not exclusively associated

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with her, because, at another place in the *Saurāmanī*, Indra (of previous *kalpa*-Mahidhara), too, is said to have given Indra (of the present *kalpa*-Mahidhara) might and strength by means of *vāk*³⁹. In addition to it, Sarasvatī is said as 'the controller of speech'.

Some times in the texts of the YV. we come across such phrases as the following :—

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| <i>Vācā vācām Sarasvatīm</i> | 21, 58; |
| <i>Vācāḥ Viśnuḥ Sarasvatīm</i> | 9, 27; |
| <i>Sarasvatī vācā</i> | 10 30. |

At first glance it seems that the terms like '*Vāk-sarasvatī*' and '*Sarasvatī-vāk*' are mentioned here. But when such phrases are read with the relevant contexts, they point out that *Vāk* means a separate entity in these contexts and may not be interpreted as being identified with Sarasvatī. However, one cannot rule out the phase of development of the closeness of Sarasvatī and *Vāk* in the light of such contexts as quoted above. But at the same time, it is also to be kept in mind that *Vāk* as a deity, having an entry separate from the goddess Sarasvatī, did exist in the YV. We see, for example, that in the context of the victims sacred to different gods in the *Āvamedha*, Sarasvatī and *Vāk* are mentioned separately. In this light, we may conclude though *Vāk* had come near to the goddess Sarasvatī in the YV but their complete identification had not been effected by that time, since both of them did exist as separate deities.

Therefore, we may not accept the view-point that Sarasvatī in the *Saurāmanī* is Speech or the apotheosis of speech. Sarasvatī in this context is neither a river nor its water which is said to have possessed of remedial nature for Indra. We hold that Sarasvatī is here a river goddess and hence she is a terrestrial deity. An atmospheric deity accomplishes his enterprises by virtue of his prowess. We do not meet here any marshal characteristic in the person of Sarasvatī. She is said to be bringing Soma from Namuci along with the *Āsvins* by virtue of her wit (*dhīr*), not valour⁴⁰. The reference to her 'mighty flood' in the context of prayers offered to her in the *Saurāmanī*⁴¹ again hints that Sarasvatī in this context is a river-goddess. Since the region of Sarasvatī, the river-goddess, had been a cradle for Vedic lore, i. e., the *mantra-lakṣṇa vāk*⁴², the river-goddess

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helped Indra to regain his lost pelf, power and prestige.

1. 19, 12; 80.
2. See YV Books 19-21, at a number of places, the oblations and prayers are made to them.
3. 19, 15. The root *duh* here has its own suggestive sense to denote.
4. 19, 95. 5. See e. g., 20, 56.
7. Thinking with the YV, Asia Publishing House, 1967, p. 92.
8. 19, 90. 9. 20, 80. 10. 19, 81; 83; 93. 11. 19, 88. 12. 19, 82.
13. Sarasvatī poured out Soma for Indra, which had been brought by the *Āsvins*-19, 34. Or again Sarasvatī bestowed on Indra, senses, manly vigour, *Āsvins* gave food, energy and wealth, 20, 58.
14. 19, 94. 15. Cf. 20, 59. 16. 19, 12; VM. p. 87. 17. 20, 80; 21, 37.
18. 19, 83: *Sarasvatī manasā pśalam nāsatyābhyaṁ vāyati dāśalam vāpūḥ*.
19. 20, 59; 21, 48. 20. Cf. 19, 80.
21. Though actually in the *Bṛahmaṇas* we have such passages where *Vāk* is said as identical to *Manas* and *Barhi*s (see under *Vāk* in the *Bṛahmaṇa-Uddhāra* Kcsā, V. R. I., Hosharpur), they are insignificant in number when viewed in comparison with those passages in which Sarasvatī is identified with *Vāk*. Moreover the continuity of the identification of Sarasvatī with *Vāk* only is available in the later literature.
22. 20, 67.
23. Cf. 20, 58. 24. Cf. 20, 69. 25. Cf. 21, 37. 26. Cf. 21, 40.
27. Cf. 21, 48. 28. Cf. 21, 53.
29. Also Cf. Mahidhara : 'Kin ca *Āsvi-Sarasvatya Indrīya Indrīyam vīryam* *paṭibhīḥ yajñamātrgaṇi vahan vahanī*, 20, 56.
30. 20, 68.
31. *Uvāṇa-Sarasvatī-vācā sāha balena ca sa*, a...20, 80.
32. Cf. *Tām Indram... sacāśvinobhā Sarasvatī/..... abhyantīṣata yajñe*.../nu *śivane*-Mahidhara/ 20-69.
33. See comm. of Uveit and Mahidhara on 19, 12, 21, 58; and 10, 5; 30 and that of Mahidhara alone on 9, 27 and 2, 20. Acc. to S Br. (5, 5, 4, 19) also; Sarasvatī here is *Vāk*.
34. Texts of white YV, p. 228, note.
35. Cf. RV 1, 23, 19: *Amīta* is in the waters, in the waters healing medicine.
36. Prof. Weber's view however will sit well in the context of the RV 10, 131, 4; 5 when the myth was of rudimentary character.
37. Cf. 19, 12; 21, 37 etc. 38. 20, 80.
39. Cf. 9, 30. *Vācā-yantī* is an epithet of Sarasvatī here Mahidhara explains it as *vācā vāyāḥ yantī*, *pūṇstīpamātrgam* / *nīyamakaritī*/ That is, Sarasvatī is the controller of speech. Here masculine gender (for her) is an *Ārya* usage.
40. The victims for the former are mentioned in 24, 4; 14; 33; and those for the latter in 24, 5; 29; 31.
41. 20, 67. 42. 20, 86=RV 1, 3, 12.
43. 19, 12; 21, 37; 21, 53: Sarasvatī with *Vajai* calls implanted wisdom in Indra's heart.

Sarasvatī's relationship with the Aśvins in the Sautrāmaṇi

Some of the joint ventures of the two divinities in the context of recreating Indra have been mentioned above. Offerings of *surā*, 'liquor' and Soma are made to both the divinities¹, both of them are said as joint drinkers of *surā* draught². In the context of the Namuci-Indra episode, both of them are mentioned together having brought Soma for Indra, through their wit³. Supporting him in sacrifice with strong food and mighty power, they sing his praise. Strong through sacrifice performed by the Aśvins and Sarasvatī, Indra cleft Vala (for the release of waters⁴.) and also killed Namuci of Asura birth (to regain the divine drink, Soma)⁵. But from other contexts,⁶ it seems that the role of Sarasvatī as compared to the Aśvins was that of an assistant to a doctor. The Aśvins had brought Soma for Indra, Sarasvatī had administered that Soma, mixed with *surā* i. e., the medicine to Indra by means of *barhis*, 'scared grass'. The sacred grass, *barhis*, symbolically is not different from *vāk* with which Sarasvatī cured Indra or from the *yajña* with which all gods helped Indra regain his lost glory. The Aśvins, too, like Sarasvatī are said as having aided Indra by *mantra-lakṣaṇā vāk* 'speech in the form of mantras'⁷. Both of them would have stood by the side of Indra when the latter was engaged in the act of killing Vṛtra. But in that context also, the Aśvins were ahead of Sarasvatī in rendering help to Indra. While the Aśvins are said as having protected Indra in his acts (of valiance)⁸, Sarasvatī did the act of *upasevā* (i.e., refreshing, etc.)⁹ which was comparatively less important than that of the Aśvins.

As to their mutual relations, it seems on the evidence of 10, 94 that Sarasvatī holds Indra as an embryo which had been injected into her by the Aśvins:

Sarasvatī yonyām garbham antar āsvibhyām patnī sūkṛtām bibharti | The Aśvins, elsewhere also, are shown as fatherly towards Indra. But as the symbolism in the sacrifice shows, one may not interpret that Sarasvatī had any marital relations with the Aśvins¹⁰. It seems that in the context of regenerating Indra, the Aśvins entrusted Sarasvatī with the act of holding embryo of infant Indra which they had created and Sarasvatī was here thus the protectress (*patnī pālayitrī*) on behalf of the Aśvins i.e., at the instance of the Aśvins she acted as the protectress of the embryo of infant Indra¹¹. Such an interpretation here that Sarasvatī acted as a protectress (*patnī*) of the infant Indra

is encouraged by another passage¹² where in conjunction with *Idā* and *Bhārati*, Sarasvatī is said to have acted as *patnī* (apparently, protectress keeping in view her nature of role in the *Sautrāmaṇi*) of Indra. In addition to it, the symbolic nature of this *mantra* (28, 8) is apparent, because it instructs Sarasvatī to hold Indra as an embryo; it also tells that Varuṇa, the lord of waters, slowly brings Indra out as glory of the essence of the water (*rāsa*) and as glory of the essence of spiritual knowledge (*sāma*). If we take Sarasvatī here as the deity comprising in her person Vedic lore, the omniscience in cosmic life and Varuṇa, the Paramātman being custodian of the highest ethical principles¹³ and Indra, being the passive partner in the act of creation, as individual soul, we would see that this wonderful *mantra* symbolically refers to the principle of functioning of an individual which the Paramātman renders possible through His machinery. That surest machinery is first the essence of water (*rasa*) as life. Life is surely the essence of water (*Āpamayāḥ prāṇāḥ*) so far as a sentient, breathing body is concerned, but, for that life to evolve, a disillusioning, satisfying spiritual knowledge (*sāma*) is necessary before it can recognise its eternal status as *Ātman* (soul) upheld in *ṛta* (truth and regularity in cosmos). Indra or the *Jīvātman* can thus be brought out as the glory of the essence of water (*rasa*) and of spiritual knowledge (*sāma*) by Varuṇa or Paramātman from the womb of Sarasvatī, the omniscient cosmic life, to be delivered to endless *ṛta*. Thus we see that it is not only the Aśvins who play a major role, as is evident from the discussion of the *mantra*, in conjunction with Sarasvatī to give new life to Indra, but the Supreme Lord Varuṇa, too, has his hand. Incidentally, we have also discussed here the relations of Sarasvatī with Varuṇa. It may also be added here that Varuṇa is also mentioned in the *Sautrāmaṇi* along with Sarasvatī, Savitr and the Aśvins, the gods who span sacrifice to heal the form of Indra;¹⁴ whereas the Aśvins and Sarasvatī are once and again mentioned as physicians who treat Indra, Varuṇa is also shown as a physician to Indra¹⁵ but he is also said to be supreme to all the physicians-*Bhiṣajām-patiḥ*.¹⁶

1. Cf. 19, 6; 7 etc. 2. 20, 76. 3. 20, 67. 4. Cf. RV 10, 68, 5-10. 5. 20, 68, 69. 6. See e. g., 19, 34; 20, 59.

7. YV 10, 34=RV 10, 131, 5: 'Putram-iva pitaravāśvino bhendravathuḥ kāryair dainsanābhiḥ'-Mahidhara explains.....kāryair kavīnām mantra-draṣṭṛnām

8. 10, 33: *Sābhāspatīndrah karm īśvaram* - Sayana explains: 'he, subhaspatī, *āśvina*, *yuvān*... *karmasu yojānakarmasu Indram āvalam arakṣalam*' [vide his comm. Rv 10, 131, 4].
9. 10, 34, 'Abhiśnak-bhīṣṇak upasavyām' Sayana and Mahidhara.
10. 10, 34. We would like to interpret here *saharānāh*-giving gifts jointly from 'ra'-to bestow. Keeping in view the marital relations of the two divinities the scholars interpret *saharānāh* as *samyak ramānāh* *satya*, 'rejoicing in each other'.
11. *āsvahyān* (dative) *pati*; *āsvahyām* (ablative) i. e. *āsvamitrad-bhūti* *pati* *pālayitṛ*.
12. 28, 8. Also see under 'Sarasvatī and Tisro-devī' discussed hereafter.
13. VM P. 24. 14. 19, 80. 15. 19, 85; 20, 70. 16. 2, 40.

SARASVATĪ AND INDRA :

It has been discussed hereafter that Sarasvatī in conjunction with Idā and Bharatī is mentioned as *Indra-pati* in the *mantras* of the *Saurāmanī*.¹ She should not be taken as a consort of Indra, as Griffith does, but as a protectress (*pālayitṛ*) as the scholars, Uvāa and Mahidhara, do. This rendering of *pāti* is most appropriate keeping in view the role of Sarasvatī in the *Saurāmanī*. Again for this very reason, Indra should not be taken as *pāti* (husband) of the three goddesses in 28, 18 but should be rendered perfectly as the *pālayitṛ devānam devānām* *vā*, 'protector of gods or goddesses'.² Sarasvatī individually as a physician to Indra and also along with the *Āsvins* has been very often seen as engaged in various acts in framing afresh the form of Indra (discussed above), including the act of holding the embryo of the infant Indra.

It may, however, be observed here that Sarasvatī's role in treating Indra was at least fourfold: (i) She aroused the wrath and self-spiritiveness of the hero by reminding him of his past glory with her *vāk*, the Vedic lore which flourished on her banks. (ii) In the act of reframing the person of the hero, she undertook the greatest hardship of holding the embryo of the infant Indra. She framed many parts of his inner and outer form. (iii) She poured out Soma for Indra which had been brought by the *Āsvins*. (iv) She refreshed Indra after he had killed Namuci. At the end of the discussion of the *Saurāmanī* and the mutual relationship of the *Āsvins*, Sarasvatī and Indra, we may observe that the trio of the divinities that is, the *Āsvins*, Sarasvatī and Indra, is almost invariably mentioned in the above sequence in the *Saurāmanī*. Its reason, that can be nearest to the truth is the fact that Indra, being the passive partner in this remedial sacrifice forms the third member of the trio. It has

been shown above that the contribution of the *Āsvins* in this sacrifice was somewhat more important than that of Sarasvatī inasmuch as they had brought Soma from Namuci which was poured out for Indra by Sarasvatī; they stood by Indra when the latter was engaged in fighting against Namuci, while Sarasvatī performed his *upa-seva* only (i. e. refreshed him). However this sequence of the trio of divinities has been disturbed, perhaps for the convenience of the metre at one or two places.³

1. 28, 8. 2. See, e. g., in 21, 48.
- Other Divinities in Association with Sarasvatī, the *Āsvins* and Indra in the *Saurāmanī* : *

Though almost all major gods viz, Agni, Savitṛ, Pusan, Uśas, Bhaga, Varuṇa and others and the nefield objects such as sacred grass, doors and cattle all contribute their mite to restore the lost energy of Indra in the *Saurāmanī*, yet the contribution of some of them in conjunction with Sarasvatī and the *Āsvins* is somewhat more conspicuous and hence being mentioned here.

The dual divinity of Dawn and Night (*Uśasā-Nakṭam*) bedecks Indra with surpassing powers day in and day out (*divasyam*, i. e., incessantly) along with the *Āsvins* and Sarasvatī. Both these goddesses are, therefore, offered oblations and prayers in the *Saurāmanī*.⁴ Savitṛ in conjunction with Sarasvatī and *Āsvins* spread sacrifice and healed Indra's form.⁵ Besides, Sarasvatī is prayed and offered oblations along with the following deities : Vanaspatī,⁶ Naraśamsa,⁷ Tannunapatī,⁸ Agni,⁹ the Divine Doors,¹⁰ the Regions (*rodasi*),¹¹ the fair formed Dawns,¹⁰ Tvaṣṭi (21, 38), the Tiger (the exemplar of royalty) and the defiled Manyu (wrath-which must precede the fatal blow to be hurled on the foe). Out of these, the relations of the first two with Sarasvatī are worth mentioning. In a prayer to Vanaspati, sacrificial post (who has gods as its golden leaves), the *Āsvins* and Sarasvatī are said to be its fruits.¹² In a prayer to Naraśamsa (who is identified with Indra and Tvaṣṭi and is said as stationed at three places), Sarasvatī and the *Āsvins* are said to be carrying his *raha* (car).¹³

* The nature and extent of the contribution of other gods mentioned in the *Saurāmanī* has no bearing on the study of the conceptual development of the goddess Sarasvatī, hence they are not being mentioned here.

1. 20, 61. 2. 19, 80. 3. 20, 65; 21, 46; 56. 4. 20, 65; 21, 46; 56. 5. 21, 31; 55.

6. 21, 13; 30. 7. 21, 29. 8. 21, 34; 49; 20, 60. 9. 20, 60; 21, 34.
 10. 21, 35. 11. 21, 38. 12. 21, 39.
 13. 21, 56 : 'Āsvibhyām Sarasvatyā supippālāḥ'—'sobhanān pippalān phalān
 yasya sah | Āsvinau Sarasvatī ca yasyā Vanaṣpateḥ phalāni-tyarthah|—Mahidhara
 and Uvaṣa
 14. 21, 55 : *Sarasvatyāsvibhyām iyate rathah*, while Madidara identifies
 Narāsaṁsa with *yajña* Uvaṣa says that *ratha* of Narāsaṁsa is *yajña*.

The Trio of Goddesses Sarasvatī, Idā and Bhārati

In the context of the *Agni-cayana*, the three goddesses—the mighty ones, glorified with song, are invited to the sacrifice with the usual Vedic request : *barhir edaṁ sadantu*, 'may they sit on this (strewn)sacred grass'.¹ In another usual prayer the goddesses are requested to place the rite (of the sacrificer) among the gods.² As to their relation with Indra, they are said as *Indra-patnīḥ*³ and at another place⁴ increasing the might of *pati* Indra. Western scholars' preference to take Indra here as their husband⁵ cannot be taken as correct. Not only that the commentators (viz., Uvaṣa, Mahidhara and Sāyaṇa) prefer to translate *pati* as *pālaka* or *pālayitṛ* but also if we view these passages along with other relevant passages, we shall see that the relations of the goddesses with Indra were that of protectresses and not that of consorts. Take for example, the following two passages occurring in the context of *Sautrāmaṇī*, "Idā Bhārati, and Sarasvatī are yielding power to Indra along with the Āsvins"⁶ and "the three goddesses along with the Āsvins have laid store of energy in the middle of Indra's navel"⁷. Moreover, they also poured out strong Soma, blended with *parisrut* (foaming juice) as a drink to gladden Indra in conjunction with the Āsvins⁸. In these contexts, apparently, they are said to be helping Indra to restore his energy. But in another context⁹ we read '*Indraṁ juṣāṇā janayo na patnīḥ*' and the commentator also explains it—*Indraṁ sevamānāḥ Tisro Devyo jāyā iva patnayaḥ āsate*. Here, too, if we read between the lines, we observe that the Ṛṣi has explained the closeness of relations by a simile and conveys that they are so near to Indra as if they are his consorts¹⁰. In addition to it, the phrase that follows the one under reference, viz., '*acchinnaṁ tantum payasā*' seems to be indicating the fact that the author wants to convey his imploration to the goddesses to help him continue his sacrifice, having come close to him, in the same closest way in which they have been helping Indra through sacrifice¹¹. That is, here, too, we may not take that the three goddesses are taken as the consorts of Indra. Of course, the logic that 'since one member

of the trio, viz., Sarasvatī, is an established helper of Indra in getting his energy restored, therefore, the other members also should be taken as helpers or protectresses of Indra' seems to be tenable in the YV because unlike RV, here the two different aspects of Sarasvatī, to wit, that of a river goddess and sacrificial Fire, have been fused into each other. In other words, the aspect of a physician of the river-goddess has also been conferred on her aspect as a sacrificial Fire¹². It will not be incorrect to say then that it is on her account that the other members of the trio, too, are said as physicians. Thus Sarasvatī's position in the trio should be taken as more important than the other two goddesses. Moreover, in the contexts the author refers in general terms to the help rendered to Indra by the other two goddesses but he is specific about the mode of help rather medium or instrument of help in the case of Sarasvatī¹³. On two occasions¹⁴ Sarasvatī is shown as associating with the Rudras, while Idā and Bhārati have done so the Vasus and the Ādityas, respectively. Their epithet *tredhā* points out that they are stationed at three different places.¹⁵

Sarasvatī's association here with the Rudras, the fore-fathers of the Maruts, is indicative of mid-region as her sphere of action. Sarasvatī seems to be the form of Agni (the atmospheric one) here (i. e., in the contexts mentioning the Tisro Devīḥ-mantras) when she is requested with the other members of trio to place the rites of the worshippers among the gods. It is an oft-quoted characteristic of Agni to carry the sacrificial oblations (that constitute a rite) to the gods¹⁶. Again in the context of the *Agnicayana*, when Sarasvatī is requested to be seated on the sacrificial grass (strewn near the altar) along with the other two goddesses¹⁷, she is again to be taken as a form of Agni, because at the time of lighting fire, the priest intends by his prayer that Agni of all the three regions may enter the fire of his sacrifice and hence the prayer is made to the three deities each representing the fire of one of the three regions.

1. 21, 19. 2. 29, 8. 3. 28, 8. 4. 28, 18.
5. See, Griffith's Trans. the white YV, pp. 286-87.
6. *Āsvineḍa na Bhārati vācā Sarasvatī maha Indrāya duha indriyam.....*/(21, 37).
7. *.....Tisro Devīḥ—Āsvineḍa Sarasvatī/juṣāṇā na madhye nābhyām Indraya dadhur indriyam.....*/(21, 54).
8. 20, 63. 9. 20, 43.
10. Such a style was popular with the ancient exponents of theology. It

has been discussed below in the context of the Brahma-Sarasvatī

11. Cf. the commentator's words : *Ta acchinmān tām avistram yajñam*

payasaḥ haatīḥ kurantū-Uvāya.

12. Sarasvatī's character, in the *mantras* in which these Three goddesses

are referred to in association with Indra (20, 43; 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18),

undoubtedly is that of a physician-i. e. the rank which she obtained

in the *Bhṛāja-yajña* arranged by gods for restoring energy to Indra.

13. 21, 37: The *Āsvins*, *Idā*, *Bharatī* and *Sarasvatī* with *Vāk* provide

Indra with power.

14. 21, 18; 29, 8

15. 20, 63. It is also alluded to in 28, 18.

16. VM p. 96.

17. 27, 19.

18. 27, 19.

19. 27, 19.

20. 43; 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

21. 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

22. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

23. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

24. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

25. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

26. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

27. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

28. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

29. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

30. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

31. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

32. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

33. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

34. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

35. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

36. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

37. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

38. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

39. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

40. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

41. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

42. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

43. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

44. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

45. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

46. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

47. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

48. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

49. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

50. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

51. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

52. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

53. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

54. 21, 37; 54; 28; 8, 18.

ated with her. For example, we have *bhesajam meṣaḥ Sarasvatī* *bhiṣag*⁹ and also *avir meṣo na bhesajam*¹⁰, 'a ram (with *surā*) is a remedy and Sarasvatī is the physician' and 'sheep and ram are remedial in association with Sarasvatī'. That a ram would have been treated as having remedial value is again evident in the context where Sarasvatī is said to have administered to Indra the ram for the vigour of his nostril (s)¹¹. It, therefore, seems that the ram came to be associated with Sarasvatī, the physician on account of its remedial value particularly in the field of restoring vigour and that, too, for the nostrils.

In the context of the victims referred to in the *Asvamedha*, (i) the *phalgu*, i. e., a goat of poor physique¹², (ii) the red-haired one (*lohitorṇi*¹³ and (iii) the one of white colour (*palakṣṭi*¹⁴-the three types of she-goats (*ajāḥ*) are said to be sacred to Sarasvatī (for sacrifice)¹⁵. She-kids also are said to be belonging to Sarasvatī¹⁶. There must have been some reasons for the association of particular animals with particular gods, as we can well see from the following references: the black-coloured victims are held to be sacred to Agni¹⁷ and Earth¹⁸, cloud-coloured to Parjanya¹⁹, dwarf ones to Viṣṇu²⁰ frogs to Parjanya²¹, crocodiles to Varuṇa²², etc. One can offer some explanation as to why these particular animals are associated with some of these gods, but the real reason behind such traditions in the case of many of them has been lost to us. The association of frogs with Parjanya and crocodiles, with Varuṇa (the presiding deity of the sea) is well understood, and it may be further added that the bright ones with *Āditya* are associated being similar in colour to the imagined person of the god and the black-coloured victims are offered to Agni, because the god turns everything black before consuming it into his flames but such explanations are insufficient inasmuch as, they, as such do not hold good in other examples. Therefore, one cannot say with certainty as to why the three types of she-goats or again she-kids are associated with Sarasvatī. The commentators do not give us any cue for it. The only reason for their association with Sarasvatī, which seems probable, would be that the kids or goats of a particular colour and structure would have been thought of for remedial value on the basis of old traditions²³, and hence their association with the established physician Sarasvatī would have been thought of as proper. (That the marrow of the animals was believed to be remedial is quite evident from the context of

Sautrāmaṇi where it is said that the *Surā* offerings to *Aśvins*, *Sarasvatī* and *Indra* were mixed with (the marrow of) animals²⁴. Of course, one may say with some confidence that the human-voiced *maina* and the human-voiced parrot related, respectively, to *Sarasvatī* and *Sarasvat* (her consort), owe their association to the fact that *Sarasvatī* by that time would have begun to be thought of as closely associated with *Vāk*. It is, therefore the birds, who can sincerely repeat human speech, were very properly regarded as sacred to *Sarasvatī*. The hypothesis that *Sarasvatī* was approaching the concept of *Vāgdevī* comes near to truth when we observe that the tip of the tongue (the human organ most vital for mugging and muttering speech) of the sacrificed-horse was offered to *Sarasvatī* in the *Aśvamedha*²⁵.

1. *Dughe dhenuḥ Sarasvatyaśvinendrāya bhūeṣajam*, 21, 34; Also see 21, 33; Cf. 20, 55; 65.
2. 8, 43. 3. *Swāha chāgam-aśvibhyām svāhā meṣam Sarasvatyai svāhā ṛṣabham Indrāya*.....21, 41; Also see 21, 44; 46; 47; 59.
4. *Hotā yakṣadaśvinau chāgasya vapāyāḥ*..... *hotā yakṣat Sarasvatīm meṣasya vapāyāḥ*.....*hotā yakṣadindram-ṛṣabhasya vapāyāḥ*.....21, 41.
5. 21, 42. 6. 24, 1; 29, 58; 59 : *Sarasvatī meṣi-Sarasvatī devatākā meṣi*—Mahidhara.
7. 21, 60.
8. J. Gonda, Change and Continuity in Indian Religion, Mount & Co, the Hague, pp. 77-78.
9. 21, 31. 10. 21, 30. 11. *Nasi vīryāya*—19, 90.
12. *Phalguḥ apuṣṭa-śavirā-Uvaṣa* 13. *Lohitorṣi raktaromavati-Uvaṣa*.
14. *Palakṣi-śvetā, palakṣa śabdo balakṣārthoḥ śveta paryāyāḥ* (comm.) 15. 24, 4.
16. *Vatsataryāḥ Sārasvatyaḥ*; 24, 14. 17. 24, 1; 9; 14. 18. 21, 10.
19. 24, 3. 20. 24, 1; 8. 21. 24, 21. 22. Ibid.
23. Cf. e. g., 21, 29; 30; 31; 32; 42 and etc.
24. Cf. 21, 29, where a he-goat is mentioned as a remedy. 25. 25, 1.

Conceptual Development of Sarasvatī

In the YV we observe that the new spheres of action of the goddess have developed. In the RV the characteristic of possessing water was mostly mentioned in the context of prayers made to her two most distinct forms—one of the river-goddess, the other of the atmospheric-goddess. *Sarasvatī*, though in the context of the *Sautrāmaṇi*, is a river-goddess as we have shown elsewhere, the characteristic of possessing water is not mentioned as frequently as it was done in the RV.¹ On the other hand, she is frequently associated with the *Vāk*, the Vedic lore (*mantra-lakṣṇā vāk*) which flourished on the banks of the river *Sarasvatī*.

This *Vāk* in the YV has become an instrument of the deified, river i. e., the river-goddess *Sarasvatī* with which she helps *Indra* to restore to him his lost glory. This *Vāk*, as we have shown above, is not distinct from a *yajña*, the sacred grass or a *Vaṣaṭ* call: because all these words symbolically represent Vedic lore with which *Indra* was made so strong as he could get back his past prestige once again. When once *Sarasvatī* was thought to be a deity nurturing *Vāk*, the parts of the body which were used to utter articulate sounds of the *mantars* or speech in general were sacrificed to her. See for example, in the context of the *Aśvamedha*, the tip of the tongue falls to her share². She is taken as the mouth of *Indra* in the context of *Sautrāmaṇi*³, as such her epithet *vāco-yantrī* (= *vāco-yantrī-commentators*), 'the controller of speech' is most natural. The concept of *Sarasvatī*'s association with old deities like *Indra*, and the *Aśvins* is noticed with change in the *Saṁhitā*. *Sarasvatī* in the YV takes the role of a physician in the *Sautrāmaṇi*. The *balakṛti*, 'showing prowess and *rasānupradāna* 'shedding rain', the two distinct qualities of an atmospheric deity are no more associated with her but instead, she webs around her person the feminine qualities of carrying an embryo of the infant *Indra* and nurturing him. On account of her association with the *Aśvins* she has become in the YV a peaceful manifestation of divine grace who rescues *Indra* from distress by her wit (*dhiyā*)⁴ and not by her Rgvedic intrepid succour to hit at the foe in battle.

Her association with *Varuṇa* here as mentioned above, is also in a new form. She has maintained her old contacts with the *Rudras*, but her Rgvedic allies, the *Maruts*, are conspicuous by their absence in the prayers addressed to her but for one context where the *Marut* folk (*Maruto-viśaḥ*).....is mentioned⁵. Beside her association with the *Tanūnapāt* and *Narāśansa* forms of sacrificial fire, she is also offered an *Audgrabhāna* oblation with *Pūṣan* and *Agni* (4, 7).⁶

Sarasvatī has struck up association with some new divinities such as *Vanaspati*, *Narāśansa*, *Tanūnapāt* and is also offered oblations and prayers by the side of new deities and deified objects such as the dual divinity *Uṣasānaktam* (Dawn and Night), the Divine Door, the *Manyu* (Passion), the Tiger, etc. She partakes of *Soma* and *Surā* libations and in this context she is assigned the third libation, the first and second being partaken of by the *Aśvins* and *Indra*, respectively.⁷ Since she is offered

a libation on the eve of darkness, it is perhaps for this reason that she is prayed to protect at night.⁹ Soma is dear to the sacrificer, for, it was poured out for Indra by Sarasvatī, after having been brought by the Aśvins, from Namuci.¹⁰ She provides Soma as the sacramental ingredient and, therefore, she is said as *dhenu*, 'cow', (lit. the one who provides pleasure).¹¹

Offerings are made to her in a number of *yajñas* for desired benefits. The desiderata for which Sarasvatī is prayed in the YV are almost the same as those in the RV., that is, the furthering of strength,¹² power (*indriyam*) and longevity (*vayas*).¹³ gain of wealth¹⁴ etc. For heroic strength (*virya*) Sarasvatī is often prayed to in the YV¹⁵ and we thus come across terms like '*Saravata-virya*' the valour of Sarasvatī, by the side of *Aśvina-teja*, 'the splendour of the Aśvins' and *Aindra-bala*, 'the prowess of Indra'.¹⁶ She alone and many a time in conjunction with the Aśvins she has been said as offering heroic vigour (*virya*) to Indra. Along with Aśvins, Sarasvatī also generates mainly vigour (*reiaḥ*) in Indra.¹⁷ All the prayers to different divinities to give Indra splendour (*tejaḥ*), sight (*cakṣuḥ*), life-breath (*prāṇa*),¹⁸ mainly vigour (*virya*), cattle (*ida*), food (*iśa*), nourishment (*samvṛja*), riches (*rai*), wealth (*yaśas*), glory (*śrī*), beauty (*rūpa*) etc., are in fact prayers to secure all these things for the sacrificer. In the Sautrāmāṇī sacrifice, the sacrificer is to be understood as Indra, for whom blessings of gods are evoked. It is indicated in the text of a *mantra* which reads :

Aśvina gobhir indriyam
aśvebhīr viryam balam /
Haviṣendram Sarasvatīm
yajamānam avardhayam //

(20, 73)

The simple interpretation of the symbolism of the Sautra-māṇī may thus be understood as such : that a *Yajamāna* can gain perfection of his person and soul through the sacrifice, like Indra, being restored glory and wealth by the succour of gods such as Sarasvatī and Aśvins. Incidentally, we come to know from the above *mantra* that the boons of Sarasvatī to her worshipper comprise of cows, mighty power, heroic vigour, strength, with which she, in cooperation with the Aśvins, makes the sacrificer strong.

Thus we may say that Sarasvatī blesses her sacrificer with diverse gifts which would have been pinned for by people of

different strata of society. Or in other words it alludes to the fact that the Sautrāmāṇī would have been popular among all—the Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣātrīyas, and the Vaiśyas. It was on this account that they speak of the nearness of the relations with the goddess by words like *nah Sarasvatī*....., 'our Sarasvatī'.....²⁰ The scholars interpret Sarasvatī as Speech Incarnate in many contexts without any cogent reasons, e.g., in the Rājāsūya when the sacrificer after *abhiṣeka* is made to sit on the *carna* 'skin of tiger' for the attainment of lustre (*viśi*), twelve offerings of ghee are made to twelve gods, one of them being Sarasvatī. The context does not warrant that Sarasvatī should be interpreted here as Speech incarnate.²¹ Similarly, in the Darśapurṇamāsa the context does not help us to take Sarasvatī as Speech Incarnate.²² As it has been observed above that Sarasvatī's association with Vak was well recognised in the YV but their complete identification was perhaps not effected in the YV. It is also important to note that the act of conferring (sharp) intellect or implanting wisdom was done not by the goddess Sarasvatī single-handed, in the YV but in conjunction with the other divinities.²³ And we have also shown that in the Sautrāmāṇī, in which she has been quoted copiously, she appears to be a river-goddess as yet. As in the RV, she is glorified here also as pervading the regions.²⁴

1. In the YV 20, 86 (=RV I, 3, 12) the reference to her 'mighty flood' in the context of a prayer in the Sautrāmāṇī has been made.
2. 25.1. 3. 19, 88. 4. 20, 67.
5. 21, 19. Here Sarasvatī a member of the trio of goddesses, is prayed along with the Maruṭ folk and others to give power and life.
6. 4, 7. 7. 19, 33. 8. 20, 62. 9. 19, 33. 10. 19, 34.
11. 20, 55. 12. 9, 27 : Where Sarasvatī is being given Vajraprasava-niya offerings. 13. 21, 19. 14. 21, 42 ff. 15. 19, 6; 20, 3.
16. 19, 8. 17. 19, 84. 18. 21, 48; 49. 19. 20, 58; 20, 64.
20. *Nah asmākam asmat-sambandhīni vā Sarasvatī*.
21. Cf. Mahidhara : *Sarāḥ śabda-pravāho yasyāḥ śa Sarasvatī*, 10, 5.
22. 2, 20. Mahidhara here also takes Sarasvatī as the deified Word.
23. 19, 53. 24. 20, 56; and also 20, 43, if we take with Mahidhara that the words *devā vīśvāḥ* are adjectival to all the three goddesses.

A Note On a few Epithets of Sarasvatī :

We have discussed above the epithet of Sarasvatī *vāco yanti*, 'controller of speech'. In the Darśapurṇamāsa, an oblation to Sarasvatī is offered with the formula : *Saravatyai yasobhaginyai svāhā*.¹ *Yasas* is food (anna-nāma, Nir. 2, 7) and *yasobhagini*—

yaśobhaginā or *yaśobhagya*, Pāṇ. 4, 4, 13 & etc.) may be explained as : *yaśaḥ annam tad eva bhagaḥ dhanam tadvatī* i. e., 'the one possessed of wealth in the form of food'. This interpretation will suit well the person of river-goddess and will give us an idea which the Rgvedic epithet *vājīnīvatī* conveyed and will be again in apposition with another epithet *haviṣmāḥ*.² *Yasas* also means 'glory' *yaśobhaginī* will then mean 'rich in glory, famous'.³ At first sight, it seems that the epithet *tanūpāḥ*⁴ of Sarasvatī by the side of *Tanūnapāt* has been cooked up by the author for alliteration; but we observe that at another place the Aśvins, the regular allies of Sarasvatī in the Sautrāmaṇi are also referred to as 'Tanūpā'.⁵ Thus, we can say that this epithet is enjoyed by Sarasvatī in the Sautrāmaṇi for her role as 'a protector of the body' of Indra. In the context of Sautrāmaṇi again she is called '*Jagrvi*';⁶ one who is awake' i. e., attentive to to her duty day in and day out.

1. 2, 20, 2. 20, 74. 3. Mahidhara's interpretation : *jivataḥ puruṣasya praśamsā yaśas tasya yaśaso bhaginī vāgrūpā Sarasvatī*, whereby he means that glory of a man is determined by the possession of speech, does not seem to be very apt as Sarasvatī in the YV is a river goddesses and not speech incarnate. 4. 21, 13. 5. 20, 56.

6. 21, 36 Mahidhara says *Jagrot Jagarāṇasilā svakārya-siddhaṇapramattā*, 'awake, i. e. attentive towards the success of her undertaking'.

The River Sarasvatī

There is a very significant reference contained in the YV 34, 11 which reads :

*Pañca nadyaḥ Sarasvatīm api yanti sasrotasaḥ /
Sarasvatī tu pañcadhā so deśeṣbhavat sarit //*

The first hemistich of the *mantra* alludes to the fact that some five rivers approached (joined) the Sarasvatī. Which were these five rivers? Griffith¹ takes them to be the five rivers of the Punjab and thus says that Sarasvatī here is the Sindhu. We have mentioned above more than once that the Sarasvatī and the Sindhu are not to be identified in the light of the facts put forth by Dr. Das² and Dr. B. R. Sharma.³ On this very ground we may reject the argument of N. G. Sardesai⁴ that these five rivers, which are to be located according to him in the Central Russian Turkistan, are but the tributaries of the Sindhu. Uvaṭa's view, too, that these five rivers are the Drṣadvatī, the Śutudru the Candrabhāgā, the Vipāt and the Irāvati, does not seem to be correct because though the Śutudru, the Vipāt and the Drṣadvatī could be thought of as joining the Sarasvatī at one time, yet the Candrabhāgā and the Irāvati could not be thought

of as belonging to the system which is referred to in the context. These five rivers cannot be identified with the affluents which join together in the hilly region and form the river known by the name of Sarasvatī because the word *sasrotasaḥ* in the *mantra* warrants that the rivers that joined the Sarasvatī were themselves fed by the affluents. They may be identified with the modern five rivers : the Chitāṅg, the Rākṣī, the Lohgarh-Khāl, the Soma and the Mārkaṇḍā which join the Sarasvatī even today.⁵ M. L. Bhargava identifies them, respectively, with the ancient rivers : the Drṣadvatī, the Rākā, the Guṅgū, the Sinivālī and the Āpayā.

The word *pañcadhā* in the second hemistich of the *mantra*, however, may challenge the validity of such an idea because if the Sarasvatī was joined by the five rivers, it should have been known as *ṣaḍ-dhā* (for, with its own stream being joined by the five other rivers of the course, it should have been thought as 'sixfold' not 'fivefold'). These rivers joined the Sarasvatī individually at different places. Had they joined collectively at one juncture to form a river what would have been known as the Sarasvatī, then the Sarasvatī would have been rightly named as *pañca-dhā*. But there would be no contradiction of our view if we think that the Sarasvatī was called *pañca-dhā* because it was thought to have bestowed its sacredness to the five rivers who joined it. That is, those rivers also who joined the Sarasvatī and thus known as sacred as the Sarasvatī were held to be part and parcel of the Sarasvatī and thus in the land watered by five of them, the Sarasvatī was known as five fold. To be more precise, the Sarasvatī with its sacredness was thought to have flowed in those five rivers also which joined it. was known as the *pañcadhā*, the 'fivefold'.

1. White YV, p. 333, note on this *mantra*.

2. Rgvedic India, pp. 45 ff.

3. The Vedic Sarasvatī, pp. 53-55.

4. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar comm. Vol. BORI, Poona, 1917, p. 94.

5. M. L. Bhargava identifies them, respectively, with the ancient rivers : the Drṣadvatī, the Rākā, the Guṅgū, the Sinivālī and the Āpayā; Rgvedic Geography, p. 53 ff.

(*śaśana*)¹. But why is there an offering of ram to Sarasvatī? The Brahmana adds that the gods approached Sarasvatī, the healing medicine, with the request that she might heal Indra. Sarasvatī asked for a guerdon. Gods agreed and appointed a ram as her guerdon. The ram is, therefore, sacred to Sarasvatī. In the context of the origin of the *Mitravinda* sacrifice, it is narrated that many gods relieved Śrī of her different belongings one by one. Sarasvatī took her prosperity (*puṣṭi*) but later on restored the same to the goddess Śrī. Here Sarasvatī is called the protector of prosperity (*puṣṭi-patī*) and bountiful (*dadātī*). In the *Upaniṣad-mantras* of the *Mitravinda* sacrifice in the Taitt. Br., Sarasvatī is regarded as prosperity (*puṣṭi*), and protectress of prosperity (*puṣṭi-patī*). She is solicited to bestow prosperity on the *yaṣṭama* in the sacrifice and is offered an oblation.⁷

1. *Sarasvatī-eva stīṣṭu vācam adhat*—Mat. S. 1, 10, 5; (= Taitt. Br. 1, 6, 1, 2; Kap. S. 48, 18; Kāthaka S. 35, 20).
2. SBr. 2, 5, 1, 11 : *Toṣṭ vāt Sarasvatī vīṣā Pūṣā lat pūnar mithunam prajānam* *etasmad ud ubhayaṁ mithunāt prajānamat prajāpatīḥ prajāḥ saptja*.....
3. SBr. 12, 7, 2, 3; 5.
4. *Atirmatha Sarasvatī*—5, 5, 4, 1.
5. 12, 7, 1, 12.
6. SBr. 11, 4, 3, 3; 7; 16.
7. 2, 5, 7, 4.

Sarasvatī in Association with Other Divinities

Sarasvatī helped Prajāpati by infusing speech into the beings created by him.¹

In the ancient legend of the origin of the Sautrāmaṇī (may it be a *Caraka* Sautrāmaṇī or the *Kaukili* Sautrāmaṇī), Sarasvatī continues to cure Indra in conjunction with the Aśvins. Sometimes in such contexts the nearness of the relations between all of them is explained in a way which appears to be rather new as compared to the YV. A text² reads : 'Indra is the mind, Sarasvatī speech, and the Aśvins are the ears.' Now their inter-relations are explained : 'In his mind whatever he thinks, that he speaks with his speech (i. e., tongue) and whatever he speaks through speech that he hears by his ears. Therefore, when the victim is offered to Sarasvatī (alone) (it is understood that) he makes an offering to all these deities together. Again, Indra is the breath, Sarasvatī the tongue and the Aśvins are the nostrils. By means of the tongue one distinguishes the taste of food and the nostrils are the path of the breath and thus when a victim³ of Indra is offered, he makes offering to these deities in common³.

SARASVATĪ IN THE BRAHMANAS

CHAPTER IV

The Brahmanical texts deal with the 'Science of Sacrifice'. Their study is indispensable for understanding the later religious and philosophical doctrines. But they record more the history of sacrifice and of priesthood than mythology; therefore, they seldom shed light on the personality of a divinity.

The ancient prayers are sometimes quoted literally and sometimes in abbreviated form in the Brahmanas. The ancient myths and legends are repeated with a little difference often narrated in the discussion of sacrifices, with which we have become acquainted above in the contents of the Samhitās. One can, however, meet with new characteristics of a godhead, though they may be very few and still wanting in detail, because the gods owe their significance to the sacrifice alone. Many a time they seem to be dependent on Prajāpati, the father of gods and demons, the lord of all creatures, and the one identical to sacrifice. Sarasvatī, too like many other godheads plays the part of an almost insignificant deity in the Brahmanas.

Sarasvatī (broadly speaking) appears in two types of myths in the Brahmanas : (i) relating to the creation of animate and inanimate beings, (ii) relating to the origin of the different *yojnas*.

In a myth explaining the origin of the universe Sarasvatī is said to have infused speech into the beings created by Prajāpati¹. Sarasvatī, a woman, and Pūṣan, a man, form a productive union. Through such a productive union Prajāpati created all living beings.²

In the ancient myth with regard to the origin of the Sautrāmaṇī, the role of Sarasvatī continues to be that of a physician virtually in all references pertaining to this ceremony. However in a reference³ she is called *bhesaja*, 'the remedy', *vīrya*, 'the vigour' and *prāṇa*, 'life' which she was said to have bestowed on Indra, and *yaṣṭama* (patron of sacrifice) previously in the YV. A ram, an ewe, a goat, etc., were offered to her in the sacrifice in line with the tradition of the YV. At one place in the SBr. a victim for Sarasvatī is said to be an ewe with teats in the dewlap

Thus we see that the mode of explaining the closeness of these three deities in the *Sautrāmaṇi* looks anew but their colourful co-mingling resulting in any fresh enterprise is conspicuous by its absence in the *Brāhmaṇas*.

Sarasvatī, the woman (*yoṣā*) with Pūṣan a male (*vr̥ṣā*) forms a productive union through which Prajāpati created all beings¹. Both of these divinities are offered oblations in conjunction with Agni; there the author explains that while Sarasvatī is identical with Vāk, Pūṣan is the cattle, i. e., prosperity (*puṣṭi*)⁵. Sarasvatī, too, at another place is identified with prosperity (*puṣṭi*)⁶.

In the context of the *Daśapeya* (*sainṣṭpa* oblations) it is told that when Varuṇa was consecrated, his lustre departed from him. He found it with the help of ten deities including Sarasvatī-Vāk being one of them⁷.

In the invocatory and oblatinal *mantras* in the *Mitravindā* Sacrifice, while Tvaṣṭr is solicited to carve out the forms, Sarasvatī is requested to be preserver of these forms⁸.

1. Mait. S. 1, 10, 5; Taitt. Br. 1, 6, 1, 2 etc. 2. ŚBr. 12, 9, 1, 13.

3. ŚBr. 12, 9, 1, 14. 4. Ibid., 2, 5, 1, 11; Kāṇva S. 1, 4, 3, 9.

5. ŚBr. 3, 1, 4, 9; 14. 6. Ibid., 11, 4, 3, 3; 7; 16. Taitt. Br. 2, 5, 7, 4.

7. ŚBr. 5, 4, 5, 2; also Cf. Taitt. Br. 1, 8, 1, 1.

8. Taitt. Br. 2, 5, 3, 3 : *Tvaṣṭā rūpāṇi dadhāti Sarasvatī*——; commentator explains : *ayān Tvaṣṭā rūpāṇi Sarasvatī dhārayitri bhūyāt*.

Offerings made to Sarasvatī at Sacrifices :

Offerings made to the goddess Sarasvatī at the sacrifices are almost the same as those we meet with in the YV, viz., a sacrificial cake (*caru*) ram (*meṣa*)¹ or an ewe (*meṣī*)², she-goats or kids (*vatsataryah*)³ etc. Soma continues to be the popular libation for Sarasvatī in line with other gods in the traditional Soma-sacrifices. In a context⁴ in the ŚBr. a certain type of food is offered to each deity separately. Here Sarasvatī is offered 'dadhi' (the sour-curd) while Indra, the two bay-steeds, Pūṣan, Mitravaruṇa.....are offered *puroḍāśa* (cake) *dhāna* (parched grains), *karambha* (porridge), *payasya* (the clotted curd) etc. *Parivāpa* (fried grains of rice) is another eatable which is offered to Sarasvatī⁵. As to the reason why these different articles of food came to be associated with certain gods, it is suggested that the deities may have been believed to be making use of these articles of food for remedial purposes, therefore, they had come to be associated with them and consequently offerings of the same were made to them. A cue to such an idea is supplied

IN THE BRĀHMANAS

by a reference⁶ in the Taitt. Br., which assigns *dhāna* (parched grains) to the Aśvins, for the reason that they performed cures therewith.

Sarasvatī is one of those twelve deities who are offered *Pārtha* oblations⁷, which are offered for the attainment of food on earth in the *Rājāyā*; Pr̥thin Vainya won food for himself with them. In these contexts Sarasvatī is identified with Vāk. With a request to bestow prosperity on the *yajamāna* in the sacrifice, she is offered an oblation⁸.

In her aspect apparently that of the river-goddess, she is also offered oblations and is requested not to harm the interests of her worshippers and bestow her goodwill and enjoyable things on them⁹.

1. Taitt. S. 1, 8, 21, 1; Taitt. Br. 1, 8, 5, 6.
2. Kāthaka S. 12, 12, 13; 13, 1; etc. Mait. S. 1, 11, 9; 2, 5, 2; Taitt. S. 1, 8, 21, 1. 3. Mait. S. 3, 13, 2; Kāṇva S. 26, 1-3; Taitt. S. 5, 5, 23.
4. 4, 2, 5, 22. 5. Ait. Br. 2, 24. 6. 1, 5, 11. 7. ŚBr. 5, 3, 5; 9, 3, 4. 8. Taitt. Br. 2, 5, 7, 4. 9. Mait. S. 1, 4, 3; Kāthaka S. 5, 4; Taitt. Br. 2, 5, 8, 6.

The River-goddess

The river Sarasvatī was treated as a goddess in the *Brāhmaṇas*. In the Ait Br.¹, we read about the Ṛṣis holding a sacrificial session on the banks of the Sarasvatī; when they turned out of their Soma sacrifice Kavaṣa Ailūṣa, the son of a slave girl, a gamester, who is a non-*Brāhmaṇa*, into a desert, saying that he should die by thirst and not drink the water of Sarasvatī. That the river (and not the presiding deity of the river) was regarded as a goddess, may be learned from the sequel where we read, "he (Kavaṣa) found favour with the waters, and 'they went out of their houses to meet him. Sarasvatī surrounded him on all sides.....As Sarasvatī had surrounded him on all sides, the Ṛṣis said, 'The gods know him. Let us call him back.' All consented and called him back." The words of the *Brāhmaṇa* quoted above unambiguously state that it was river Sarasvatī who was regarded a godhead.

This legend² throws light on the social set-up of those days. Happily we also notice that the river-goddess loved her devotees on merits of righteousness and not on caste. As such she stood comparable to the R̥gvedic Uṣas who treated the stranger and the acquainted alike³.

It was by the blessings of the river-goddess that Cyavana, the Bhārgavan became again young and won a girl for wife. He was also blessed with whatever food he desired by the river-goddess⁵.

In the Taitt. Br. we come across two prayers⁶ who are addressed to the river goddess. The river-goddess, one rich in food, is requested in the first *mantra* to smear the face of the worshipper with honey (i. e., the savour of life) which is contained amongst bulls and steeds. In the second *mantra* the goddess is called as *vaiṣambhalyā*⁷, 'one who nurtures the people.' She is solicited to bestow enjoyable things and her blessings are evoked for the enjoyment of her (tasteful) waters. In the Mait. S.⁸ and the Kaiha. S.⁹ we meet with a prayer which is somewhat similar to the second *mantra* (i. e. Taitt. Br. 2, 5, 8, 7). In the Mait. S. Sarasvatī is addressed as *pāitī* 'the protectress' and this world is said to be belonging to her. She is therefore, called *veśa-yāmanī*, 'the controller of the people.'¹⁰ After having been offered respectful salutations, she is requested not to harm the worshippers (naturally by her flooded waters).

As Rudra with malevolent characteristics is called, Śiva in order to avert his great malevolence¹¹, Sarasvatī with capability¹² to work havoc by virtue of her flood is called *veśa-bhagīnī*¹³ and *veśabhagīnī*, i. e., one containing sisterly affection for the people¹⁴. She is also offered oblation in the similar capacity.

1. 2, 19. 2. Śaṅ. Br. 12, 3. Here the Ṛsis who gathered together for sacrifice are styled as Madhyamas.
3. RV I. 124, 6 : 'Vajāmīn na pari cīyakti jānim'.
4. At his own instance, the sons of Cyavana carried him to the Sarasvatī-
Jai Br. 3, 120; Tāṇḍya Br. 22, 14, 2.
5. Cyavana's achievements were the result of his knowledge of the
Vastuśāstra Brāhmaṇa—Jai Br. 3, 120.
6. (i) *Ṛad apsu te Sarasvatī* / *Goṣe-āśveṣu yam madhu* /
Īna me vajīmatā / *Mukham ādhi Sarasvatī* / 2, 5, 8, 6.
(ii) *Ṛa Sarasvatī Vaiṣambhalyā* / *Tayām me rāva* /
Tasyā te bhīkṣyā / *Tasyā te bhūyisīha-bhājo* / *bhūyasmā* / Ibid., 7.
7. (i) *Viśam prajānam bharaṇam pōjanam Vaiṣambhātām* / *tat karitum kṣamā vaiṣambhātā* /
—Śāyana (ii) Ap. SS (4, 14, 4) has the variant 'Vaiṣambhātā',
sounds i. e. 'ba' for 'va' and 'ta' for 'ra'. Then it would mean *vīśa*
prajānam varānam vīśambhātām / *tat karitum kṣmā vaiṣambhātā* /
8. 1, 4, 3. 9. 5, 4.
10. The comm. is wrong when he translates '*Veśa-yāmanī*' as '*possidendi*'
'the giver of the clothes' etc. vide comm. on VA. SS. 1, 4, 4, 41.

11. (i) *Paintī pātīnyasā te loko namaste asiṇ, mā mā himsiv*—
(iii) Cf. RV 6, 61, 14 : *payasā mā na ā dhak*. 12. RV. 10, 92, 9.
13. See RV 1, 114, 7; 8; 2, 33, 11; 14.
14. Ap. SS. (3, 10, 2; 4, 13, 7) reads *vīśa-bhagīnī* here.

The River Sarasvatī :

The waters of the Sarasvatī were held sacred and used at the time of consecration in the *Rājāsūya* ceremony¹. Ceremonies or the session of ceremonies known as the *Saravastī-satīnas* were performed on the banks of the river as part of which people had been undertaking the *pratiṇoma yātrā*, 'sojourn from the spot of its disappearance to the source' and performing *yajñas* at different stages².

The spot where the Sarasvatī lost itself into the sands was known as *Vinaśana*³. *Yajña* was performed on the southern⁴ side of the river at this place. The other sacred spot was the place where the Sarasvatī joined the *Disadvatī*. This confluence was known as *Disadvatīpyāyā* or *Apyāyā*⁵. The source of the Sarasvatī which was situated at a place known as *Plakṣa-prastavāna*⁶ was another sacred spot for the performance of sacrifices. The *avabhīṭha* 'bathing at the end of a principal sacrifice'⁷, was often taken at this place and the *Kāmyā-ṣṭī* 'oblation consisting of butter and food etc., offered for some particular object and with a view to future fruition' was also offered here⁸. It was considered to be heaven itself, in fact⁹. It was situated at a distance equivalent to fortyfour *astvins* from *Vinaśana*¹⁰.

The region of the Sarasvatī continued to be a cradle for Vedic culture in the Brāhmaṇas, because we see that *Māthava*, the *Videgha* started from the Sarasvatī towards the east carrying the Vedic Agni in his mouth. In other words, the Vedic culture that thrived on the banks of the sacred river Sarasvatī was carried by the volarities to the different distant lands particularly towards the east¹¹. In another text we notice the presence of *Nami Sāpya*, a king of *Videgha* in that holy land, where are situated the Sarasvatī river and Kurukṣetra¹² and the *Naimiśa* and *Khāṇḍava* forests¹³. Similarly, we meet here *Kusurabinda*, son of *Uddalaka*, of northern *Kosala*¹⁴.

How sacred is Kurukṣetra, the land watered by Sarasvatī, is known by an interesting legend in the Tāṇḍya Br.¹⁵ Indra once made a bet with Rukṣma that whoever of the them first ran round the earth should be the winner. "Indra ran around the earth. Rukṣma ran around Kurukṣetra. She said, 'I have con-

quered you' and he said, 'It is I who have conquered you.' They asked the gods; and the gods said, 'Kurukṣetra is as great as the altar of Prajāpati, so neither of the two won.'

1. Taitt. Br. 1, 8, 2, 5; Mait. S. 2, 1, 7; 2, 3, 5; 4, 3, 9.
2. Tāndya Br. 25, 10. 3. Sāyaṇa's comm. on Tāndya Br. 25, 10, 1.
4. Lāṭ ŚS 10, 15, 1. 5. Tāndya Br. 25, 10, 15.
6. It is variably written as Plākṣa-Prasravaṇa, Plākṣa-Prāsravaṇa (—Śravaṇa) and Prākṣa-prasravaṇa-Jai. Br. 2, 298.
7. Such a bath was taken by a king of Videha, Namī by name: Tāndya Br. 25, 10, 17-18. But it was taken also at Kārapacava on the banks of the Yamunā near the Sarasvatīibid., 23. (also La ŚS 10, 17, 10; 11). 8. Tāndya Br. 25, 10, 22. 9. Jai. Br. 2, 298.
10. Tāndya Br. 25, 10, 26. *Āsvina* may mean distance lying between the two stages. Sāyaṇa says: *Ekenāshoratreṇa yāvantam adhoṇam gacchati tāvān-ekāsvinaḥ*. 11. ŚBr. 1, 4, 1, 14. 12. Tāndya Br. 25, 10, 17.
13. Tāndya Br. 25, 6, 4. 14. Taitt. S. 7, 2, 2, 1; to be read with Mbh. 9, 38, 22-24. 15. 25, 10.

Sarasvat

Sarasvat is quite a colourless deity in the Brāhmaṇas. He forms a pair with Sarasvatī¹. One mess of rice, which is often kept in twelve potsheds and is thus called *dvādaśa-kapālaḥ*², is offered to him on a full moon day, while the other is offered to Sarasvatī on a new moon day³. He is identified with Mind, 'Mana', while Sarasvatī is identified with speech, 'Vāk'. Sarasvat is substituted by Indra in other references where he is identified with Mind, while Sarasvatī with Speech⁴.

Sarasvat is identified with the celestial region, (*svargo lokah*) while Sarasvatī is identified with Speech (Vāk).⁵ Sarasvat is identified with Pūrṇamāsa, 'full moonday' while Sarasvatī with Amāvāsyā 'the fifteenth day of the dark half of the lunar month'.⁶ *Satyavāk*, 'one true to his word' or 'one of truthful speech' is an epithet which is shared by both Sarasvatī and Sarasat⁷.

1. Tāndya Br. 16, 5, 3, 4; Jai. Br. 2, 185. 2. G. Br. 2, 1, 12. 3. ŚBr. 11, 2, 4, 9; 2, 6, 3; Taitt. Br. 1, 6, 1, 11. 4. ŚBr. 12, 9, 1, 13; 14.
5. Tāndya Br. 16, 5, 15; 16. Taitt. S. 3, 5, 1, 4; Mait. S. 1, 4, 15; GBr. 2, 1, 12. At another place in Mait. S. 4, 2, 7; he is said as *Samvatsara*, the Year.
6. See Taitt. Br. 2, 5, 4, 6; Mait. S. 2, 7, 13; 4, 12, 6.
7. Taitt. Br. 1, 8, 3, 4; Mait. S. 1, 8, 19.

Vāg Vai Sarasvatī

We have already observed above that the identification of Vāk with Sarasvatī took place in the Brāhmaṇas or in the later Samhitās (some of the portions of which are supposed to be contemporaneous with the Brāhmaṇas). In a ritualistic scheme it was most natural to attach importance to Vāk, 'Speech' and thus we see that Vāk has often been identified with different ingredients of *yajña*¹. This Vāk may be styled as *Aparā Vāk*, one of substantive nature, based on words and sound. But Vāk often appears in a number of cosmogonic legends also; in this form she may be styled as *Parā Vāk*. She is at the root of creation and Prajāpati is often said to have created the universe with Vāk as his instrument of creation. In some legends Vāk is the first or second progeny² and in others his wife³. In Jai. Br. Vāk is said to be the first thing in existence. Vāk intended to perform a sacrifice and poured her splendour which ultimately turned into twelve months and increased the number to thirty which transformed into days from which the year cycle was born and it became the first *yajña*⁴. According to a legend occurring in the Kāṇva S., Kāṭhaka S. and Kauṣṭaki Br., Vāk is the consort of Prajāpati. Vāk became pregnant and bore Soma as the first offspring, after having given birth to Soma, Vāk entered into Prajāpati⁵. Vāk has been described as the Supreme Brahma and is to be addressed as the Queen and the Vedas and other branches of learning are said to have been born as attendants of Vāk⁶. In another legend Vāk has been called the starting day and subsequently the starting point in the time cycle and also the initiator of sacrificial activity, and as such is the seat of every manifestation⁷. Prajāpati created Vāk, Vāk in turn created the cow and for the maintenance of this cow, he created eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, and twelve Ādityas⁸. Each of these groups kept the cow for a year and with her help multiplied into the manifold manifestations of cosmos. The gradual process of creation of the earth from the aquatic Vāk and of the space from the earth and of the heaven from the space is the theme of another legend in Jai. Br.⁹. With Vāk for shovel, the *devas* dug out the *ṛcs*, the *Yajus* formulas and the *Sāmans*, i. e., the *Veda-trayī* (the Triple Science, the Three Vedas)¹⁰. In all these legends Vāk is the latent creative power.

The cosmic character of Vāk is also revealed in her association with Prāṇa¹¹ (the life-breath) with whom she has been

Sarasvatī in several Brāhmaṇa passages has been identified with Vāk²⁵. The identification of the two is shown mostly by the following words : (i) *Vāg vai Sarasvatī*, (iii) *Vāg eva Sarasvatī*, and (iii) *Vāk Sarasvatī*.

The first two phrases, i. e., *Vāg vai Sarasvatī* and *Vāg eva Sarasvatī*, are but to emphasise the oneness (in meaning) of the two words²⁶. The term *Sarasvatī* is appended to Vāk in order to highlight the divine character of Vāk or to show that *Sarasvatī* the Vāg-devatā is intended in the context and not *Sarasvatī*, the river or river-goddess. In order to make it more clear, we may take, for example, the following *mantra* :

Prāṇāya svāha Vyāṇāya svāha Sṇāṇāya svāha |

Cakṣuṣe svāha Śrotṛāya svāha |

Manase svāha Vac Sarasvatyai svāha |

Dakṣāya svāha Kratave svāha |

(Taitt. Ār. 4, 5, 1).²⁷

Here *Sarasvatī* is appended to Vāk in order to underline the divinity of Vāk in the context. In other words, it is shown that in the context Vāk, the tongue, mouth or the faculty of speech is not intended here, but the *śabdātmitikā Vāgdevatā* (the goddess Speech having words as her person)²⁸. *Prāṇam Vyāṇam Āpānam*, etc., are all deified here. But to Vāk the author has appended 'Sarasvatī' because he wants to distinguish the divine Vāk (*dātvī Vāk*) from human vāk (*manuṣī Vāk*)²⁹. In the same manner we shall interpret *Vācam Sarasvatīm svāhākārena parigṛhīṣvāha*,³⁰ Similarly, where we get phrases like *Sarasvatī Vāk* or *Sarasvatya Vācā*, etc.³¹, we would understand that *Sarasvatī* the Vāgdevatā is intended and not *Sarasvatī*, the river or river-goddess.

These identifications in the Brāhmaṇas are given in order to explain the meaning of the Vedic texts, more explicitly in the context of the ritual. If we collect all such identifications, we shall have a large number of synonyms of a single word. But such synonyms are meaningful only in their respective contexts. Now we shall see as to which form of Vāk (the *Parā Vāk* or *Āparā Vāk*) came to be identified with which form of *Sarasvatī* (the transcendent atmospheric goddess or the terrestrial river-goddess). One observes no difficulty in thinking that the *Parā Vāk* may have been identified with the transcendent form of the goddess *Sarasvatī*, the form which is depicted in the cosmogonic

identified¹². She is *Ekākṣarā*, i. e., Om¹³. She is *Brahma*¹⁴, *Subrahma*¹⁵, one stationed in the heart (*hṛdaye paritīṣṭhita*)¹⁶. Vāk is *Vīrātī*¹⁷.

The cosmic characteristics of Vāk have been given here succinctly as they are important with regard to the study of the evolution of the identification of *Sarasvatī* with Vāk. They are the cause or the result of the identification of the two goddesses. In other words, it cannot be said with certainty that the fusion of the characteristics of both the goddesses had occurred as a result of the identification of the two or their identification may have been effected for the mutual fusion of their characteristics. The latter seems more probable because similarity of characteristics might have led to their identification to begin with and later on one of the two goddesses represented a personality comprising the characteristics of both of them. For example, when we say that *Sarasvatī* is Vāk, it would mean that *Sarasvatī* is Speech incarnate, the Word, the Creative Force, etc.

Though Vāk in the form of Vedic *mantras* i. e. *Mantrarūpa Vāk*, is a part of the *Parā Vāk*, which is *Akṣara*, the Indestructible¹⁸, its substantive form is met with in a number of contexts in the Brāhmaṇas. The *Mantrarūpa Vāk* touches the sphere of intellect and is thus equated with a number of metres, poets and priests, the altar, the *Vasat-calls*, the *Svāhākāra* (utterance of exclamation *svāha*) the sacrificial fire, etc. This Vāk has sound (*dhvani*) and word (*śabda*) as its basic elements. The sphere of action of this Vāk is the terrestrial world. She is equated with *yajña*¹⁹. She milks out all desires for the sacrificer²⁰. She was the food for the sustenance of gods in the days of antiquity²¹. With Vāk one upholds cattle²²; Vāk is thus prosperity (*puṣṭi*)²³. Vāk in a number of Vāk-Soma legends of the Brāhmaṇas²⁴ is different from Vāk of the cosmogonic legends. Here it is the female aspect or more precisely the instrument rather than ultimate end; by bartering her to a divine state, exhilaration (Soma) is secured. Instead of being the summum bonum, Vāk is the most potent means for excellence to achieve such a state. Vāk here in her *Āparā* form may not be taken as mere activity of speech, it seems to be the power of sacred speech which corresponds to the *Rāyanti* of the *Āgama* tradition. We have thus noticed in the Brāhmaṇas two forms of Vāk, the *Parā* and the *Āparā*.

legends, wherein Sarasvatī is said to be at the root of creation³² or equated with the primordial waters³³.

On the other hand, the *Aparā Vāk*, i. e., the *Mantrarūpā*-Vāk, came to be identified with the river-goddess Sarasvatī. The validity of such an idea is proved by certain references in the Brāhmaṇas which allude to the identification of the river-goddess Sarasvatī with *Mantrarūpā* Vāk. For example, we read in the context of the 'Preparation of waters for consecration' *Sa Sārasvatīreva prathmā gṛhṇātī | tābhīrabhiṣīcatī vāgvaī Sārasvatī vācāivainametadabhiṣīcatī.....* "He first takes (water) from the (river) Sarasvatī..... Therewith he sprinkles him,..... Sarasvatī being (the goddess of) Speech it is with Speech he thereby sprinkles him"³⁴ We further have in this context..... *na juhoti | Sārasvatīṣu.....* ||³⁵ *Atha yat Sārasvatīṣu na juhoti | vāgvaī Sārasvatī vajra ājyam ned vajreṇājyena vācam hinasanti tasmāt Sārasvatīṣu na juhoti* ||³⁶. "He does not offer on the waters from the Sarasvatī..... And as to why he does not offer on (the water) from the Sarasvatī..... Sarasvatī to be sure, is (the goddess of) Speech, and ghee is the thunder-bolt. 'Lest I should injure (the goddess of) Speech'. Thus he thinks and, therefore he does not offer on the water from the Sarasvatī"³⁷. Again in Jai. Br. we read in the context of the offerings of Soma-*'Tāsām Sārasvatyā upamajjane dīkṣā; dakṣiṇe tīre dīkṣānte | Sārasvatyā yanti, Vāg vai Sārasvatī.,* "Their initiation is done after the completion of bath in the Sarasvatī, which is taken on the right bank at the completion of initiation ceremony. They approach Sarasvatī. Sarasvatī indeed is speech." Thus here we find that the identification of the river-goddess Sarasvatī (because the Sarasvatī river is the river-goddess, as we have observed above) with *Mantrarūpā* Vāk, the speech of the the seers is spoken of in straight terms. The association between the *Mantrarūpā* Vāk and the river-goddess Sarasvatī for a very long time seems to be a very potent reason which would have led to their identification. In the Brāhmaṇas, 'close-association' is the basic reason for most of the identifications³⁹.

Similarity in the characteristics of the two goddesses would have also led to their identification⁴⁰. But such a similarity in characteristics is met with only between the atmospheric Vāk and the atmospheric goddess Sarasvatī, because both of them possess the aquatic aspect. We have observed above that there is a consistent emphasis on the aquatic aspect of Vāk in the R̥V and it has been retained in the Brāhmaṇas also where we read:

'Ocean (*Samudra*), verily, is Vāk; neither Vāk nor the ocean diminishes.⁴¹ Vāk seems to be, as such, an 'abstract representation of the aquatic element (the seed of the cosmos)⁴². In the reference of the Taitt. Br.⁴³... *'Eṣā vā apām pṛṣṭham yat Sārasvatī,*' we may take that Sarasvatī, too, is spoken of as being at the root of all Primordial waters. Thus the identification of the two goddesses does not present any difficulty when both have water as their common characteristic. But such an identification has not been explicitly alluded to in the Brahmanical texts, whereas the identification of the *Mantrarūpā* Vāk with the river-goddess Sarasvatī has been mentioned in unambiguous terms in some passages, as we have seen above. Moreover, the identification of the latter type plays a more significant role in the phase of the conceptual development of Sarasvatī. For, Sarasvatī came to be regarded as Speech Incarnate or as the presiding deity of knowledge and learning or as a deity dispensing knowledge and intellect, as a result of her identification with Vāk (i. e. Speech, the Word, the Vedas)⁴⁴. It was Vāk first and not Sarasvatī who is believed to be the root of origin of the knowledge contained in the Vedas⁴⁵. It was Vāk who was seen first of all by the seers by the side of sacrifice⁴⁶. For her identification with Vāk, Sarasvatī later on came to be regarded as the abode of all sciences, the mother of the Vedas, etc. and such characteristics are first met with in Vedic literature as being possessed by Vāk. For example, in the ŚBr. we read:

(i) *Sa yathā sarvāsām apām samudra ekayānam |
... evaṁ sarvāsām vidyānām vāg ekayānam ||* (14,5,4,11)

(As that ocean is the only place of resort of all waters, similarly Vāk is the only abode of all the sciences).

(ii) *Etad vai sahasraṁ vācaḥ prajātaṁ yad eṣa trayo vedāḥ.... |
(5, 5, 5, 12)*

(That triple Veda is the thousandfold progeny of Vāk).

'Vāk is mother of the Vedas'—*vedānām mātā*.⁴⁷ After the identification '*bekurā*' the synonym of Vāk was borne by Sarasvatī also.⁴⁸

The *mantralakṣṇā* Vāk also is spoken of as one of a transcendent character when it is said about her : 'All gods and the Gandharvas, cattle and men owe their livelihood to her (Vāk).⁴⁹ She is one of the six self-born deities (*syambhu-devatā*).⁵⁰ Such a degree of height for Vāk was but natural in the context of liturgical firmament. Here we may say that the *Aparā* Vāk is

also glorified and spoken of as *Parā Vāk*. Such an apogee is never attained by Sarasvatī in the Brāhmaṇas. But such passages are not wanting in the Brāhmaṇas as could speak of the *Mantra-lakṣṇā Vāk* (i. e. *Apārā Vāk*) as subordinate to Sarasvatī. In Taitt. S.⁵¹ we read: 'Sarasvatīm Vāk gacchati'. By the benison of Sarasvatī, Vāk is to be nurtured.⁵² Sarasvatī exercises a hold on Vāk.⁵³ Manas (Mind) and Vāk are said to be the two *Sarasvatā-uteras* (i. e., the fountains of Sarasvatī).⁵⁴

When once the identification was effected, then the offerings made to Sarasvatī were but to delight Vāk.⁵⁵ One of the two libations, for the choosing of priests in the Soma-sacrifice, is offered with the call 'Hail to Sarasvatī' and thereby Vāk is said to have been released who in turn supports the sacrifice. In the text of the *mantra* which is as follows:

Juṣṭo Vāco bhūyaśam juṣṭo Vacaspataṃ Devī Vāk |

Yad vāco madhūmatī tasmīn mā dhāh svāha Sarasvatyai ||

(Acceptable to Speech may I become, acceptable to the lord of Speech; O Divine Speech, what of thy speech is sweetest, in that may he today place us. Hail to Sarasvatī!);⁵⁶ the goddess Vāk is addressed here but the actual offering is made with the call 'Svāha Sarasvatyai'. That is, by and by Sarasvatī and the goddess Vāk were thought as not different from each other, rather each of the two could represent the notion of either divinity. And thus in the *mantra*:

Anu mām Indro anu mām Prajāpatī -
ranu Somo anu Vāgdevyavī |

(Ait. Ār. 5, 1, 1),

one may think without any reservation with Śayana that 'Sarasvatī' is intended here by the word Vāgdevī, who is solicited here along with other godheads to protect the worshipper.⁵⁷ In the Samhitopaniṣad Br. (4) 'Sarasvatī' is said as a kind of gift (*dāna*) which delivers a man from (the limbo of) abyss. Here 'Sarasvatī-lakṣṇā-dāna-stands for 'the imparting of education'. Again in the Jai. Br.,⁵⁸ it is said that Prākṣa-Prasavaṇa (the famous source of the river-goddess Sarasvatī) is the highest end of Vāk. Here Sarasvatī is meant by the word Vāk. Similarly, the sprinkling of a being with the waters, of the river-goddess Sarasvatī symbolically signified that the sprinkling with Vāk had been done.⁵⁹

When Sarasvatī became Vāgdevī, she was supposed to exercise full control on the faculty of speech. We are told in

the Ait. Br.⁶⁰ that by a triplet to Sarasvatī, the Hotā can deprive a sacrificer (the defaulter or jocularly we may say the one who does not give a sacrificial fee to the priest according to the wishes of the latter) of his speech. Sarasvatī's worship thus could effect a magic spell also.

The identification of Sarasvatī with Vāk the tongue was also effected in the Brāhmaṇas.⁶¹ It was quite natural that when Sarasvatī came to be identified with Vāk, she was also regarded as exercising influence on the vocal region tongue, speech, and mind. She was, therefore, propitiated for the sin committed by a person for uttering a false speech (*anṛita*).⁶² But uptil now, Sarasvatī did not enjoy exclusively this privilege of being propitiated for the sin of telling a lie.⁶³ However, it was Sarasvatī who infused speech into the beings created by Prajāpati.⁶⁴

The identification of Sarasvatī with tongue as an organ of uttering articulate sound was, of course, not unnatural but it is difficult to account for its identification with tongue, the organ of tasting food-which we come across in the Śaṃ. Br.⁶⁵ However, we suggest here that such an identification (i. e., the identification of Sarasvatī with Vāk, the tongue, an organ of tasting food) came to be effected by the 'Devā-Mānuṣa doctrine' by virtue of which we may say that *Mānuṣa* (man) imitates the *Devā*.⁶⁶ Vāk is of two kinds-*Daiiv* (the divine one) and *Mānuṣī* (pertaining to man).⁶⁷ Śayana explains: it is divine when it is *Vaidikī* (i. e., in the form of eulogies of gods) and it is human when it performs the act of tasting and uttering. Now we may say that when the identification of Sarasvatī came to be effected with *Daiiv Vāk*, this (identification) was also extended to the *Mānuṣī Vāk* tongue, an organ of tasting food.

1. See under Vāk in Brāhmaṇa-Uddhara Kcṣṭ, op. cit.
2. Jai. Br. 2, 242; 252. 3. Ait. Br. 25, passim. 4. 2, 396.
5. Kāṇva S. 42, 1; Kāṇhaka S. 12, 5; 27, 1; Kau. Br. 12, 5, 14.
6. ŚBr. 14, 6, 10, 5-6. 7. Jai. Br. 2, 57. 8. Ibid., 2, 252.
9. Ibid., 2, 244. 10. ŚBr. 7, 5, 2, 5.
11. All the *Prānas* are stationed in Vāk: ŚBr. 12, 8, 2, 25.
12. She is coupled with the *Prānā*-Jai. Br. 1, 306; ŚBr. 1, 4, 1, 2.
13. She is the mother and *Prānā*, the son: Ait. Ār. 3, 1, 6.
14. Mait. S. 3, 2, 8. 15. Jai. Br. 2, 392; 422; 3, 294; Tāṇḍya Br. 4, 3.
16. 3; Ait. Br. 25, passim. 17. Jai. Br. 1, 82; 202; 2, 78; 3, 307.
18. Ibid., 2, 78. 19. Taitt. Br. 3, 10, 8, 4; Śaṃ. Ār. 11, 6.
20. Mait. S. 3, 2, 10; Jai. Br. 3, 67; ŚBr. 3, 5, 1, 34.

18. Taitt. Br. 2, 8, 8, 5. 19. Taitt. S. 5, 3, 3, 5. 20. Ait. Ār. 1, 3, 2.
21. *Vāg vai devānām purāṇnam āsa* : Taitt. Br. 1, 3, 5. 22. *Tāndya* Br. 10, 3, 13.
23. Taitt. S. 2, 4, 6, 2. 24. See. e. g., Ait. Br. 5; 15, 25; Jai. S. 6, 1, 6; ŚBr. 3, 5, 1, 2-7.
25. Taitt. S. 2, 1, 2, 6 etc. Mait. S. 1, 10, 5 etc. Kap. S. 8, 45, 2 etc. Kāṭha. S. 23, 2, etc. Kau. Br. 5, 2, etc. Go. Br. 2, 1, 20; Jai. Br. 1, 70 etc. ŚBr. 7, 5, 1, 31 etc. Ait. Br. 2, 24 etc. Taitt. Ār. 4, 5, 1 etc.
26. Cf. Sāyaṇa's comm. on *Tāndya* Br. 6, 7, 7 : explaining, '*Vāg vai Sarasvatī*' he says—'*Mantragatayor vāksarasvatīśabdāyor aikyartham āha*'.
Also see Taitt. Ār. 15, 1.
28. Cf. Sāyaṇa's comm. on this text.
29. *Daivi vāk* and *mānuṣi vāk*—the two forms of *Vāk* would have been spoken of in current idiom in the *Āraṇyakas*, is ascertained from the Ait. Ār. 1, 3, 1. Also see Sāyaṇa's comm. on it.
30. Jai. Br. 1, 82. But the term '*Vāk Sarasvatī*' can also be taken as used for *Vāgdevī* *Sarasvatī* in order to distinguish her from the river-goddess or the river *Sarasvatī*. Cf. Śān. Dh. Sūtra : 110, 30. '*Medhām Kṣāntim Ruciṁ Vānim Śraddhām Sarasvatīm Dakṣām.....tarpayāmi*.'
31. As e. g., we have in ŚBr. 5, 4, 5, 2 and Taitt. Br. 1, 8, 1, 1.
32. See. e. g., ŚBr. 2, 5, 1, 11.
33. Taitt. Br. 1, 7, 5, 5.....'*Eṣa vā apām prṣṭam yat Sarasvatī*'.
34. ŚBr. 5, 3, 4, 3. 35. Ibid., 23. 36. ŚBr. 5, 3, 4, 25.
37. Translation of J. Eggeling. 38. 2, 297.
39. Nāthū Lāla Pāṭhaka : *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa kā Eka Adhyayana*, p. 52 ff.
40. The author of the Ait. Ār. (1, 1, 1; 5, 1) finds, perhaps, the constitutional similarity at the root of the identification of *Vāk* and *Anuṣṭup*. *Vāk* and *Anuṣṭup* both have four *pādas*—both of them are identified, therefore.
41. Ait. Br. 5, 16; Cf. *Tāndya* Br. 7, 7, 9. 42. F. D. K. Bosch : *The Golden Germ*, p. 52. 43. 1, 7, 5, 5.
44. Cf. Ait. Ār. 2, 3, 6; ŚBr. 6, 5, 4, 3; 10, 4, 5, 2.
45. Cf. e. g., Ait. Ār. 3, 1, 6; ŚBr. 14, 8, 9, 1.
46. She was sought after by the Ṛṣis who composed the Vedic hymns, as well as by the gods through austerity:—*Tam ṛṣayo mantrakṛto manīṣiṇaḥ / Anvaicchan devās tpsā śramaṇa* (Taitt. Br. 2, 8, 8, 5). Through *Vāk* gods saw their way which was unknown to them.....ŚBr. 4, 5, 1, 3. Also Cf. Jai. Br. 3, 350.
47. Taitt. Br. 2, 8, 8, 5. 48. *Tāndya* Br. 1, 3, 1. 49. Taitt. Br. 2, 8, 8, 4.
50. Jai. Up. 4, 8, 1, 1. 51. 2, 3, 11, 1. 52. Kāṭhaka S. 5, 1.
53. Taitt. Br. 1, 6, 2, 2. Also Cf. Jai. Br. 2, 130. 54. ŚBr. 7, 5, 1, 31.
55. Śān. Br. 5, 2.
56. Śān. Br. 10, 6; Go. Br. 2, 2, 17; Jai. Br. 1, 82; Mait. S. 1, 3, 1.
57. Also see Taitt. Ār. 2, 12, 1 along with Sāyaṇa's comm. The same idea is met in the text.
58. 2, 298 : *Eṣa u ha vai Vāco nto yat Prākṣaḥ Prāsraṇaḥ*.
59. See the context of *Abhiṣeka* in the *Rājasūya* and also Mait. S. 2, 1, 7; 2, 3, 5; 4, 3, 9.
60. 3, 3. 61. ŚBr. 12, 9, 1, 14 : *Jihvā Sarasvatī*. 62. Mait. S. 4, 14, 17.
63. *Viśvedevāḥ* have been also propitiated in this context, Mait. S. 4, 14, 18.
64. Mait. S. 1, 10, 5; Taitt. Br. 1, 6, 1, 2; Kap. S. 48, 18; Kāṭhaka S. 35, 20.
65. 12, 8. 66. By this doctrine we mean that a common man is to follow always the example of the leader, the *Dēva*. In order to illustrate it, we may refer here to Br. Ār. UP. 6, 4, 2 where we are told that since *Prajāpati* performed a certain act, therefore, the sacrificer would do the same.
67. Ait. Ār. 1, 3, 1.

CHAPTER V

SARASVATĪ IN THE VEDIC KALPA-SŪTRAS

We get a number of references to the river *Sarasvatī* and the goddess *Sarasvatī* in various sacrifices and ceremonies the exegeses of which are given in the *Śrauta-Sūtras*, *Gṛhya-Sūtras* and *Dharma-Sūtras*. But on a very few occasions do we get fresh information which has a bearing on the personality of *Sarasvatī*. This is so because (i) most of the old rituals are repeated in the *Sūtras* and (ii) in newly-sprung ceremonies the text of the old Vedic *mantras* is almost invariably quoted. See, for example, in the Śān. ŚS¹ the old *mantra-juṣṭo vāco bhūyāsm*, etc. is applied in the new ceremonies like *Aikādaśini* and *Savanīya-paśu*. Again in the Initiatory ceremony (*Anvārambhañīyā Iṣṭi*) the invocative and oblational verses for the *havis* are quoted from the RV.³ Thus it will be a sheer repetition if we record here that *Sarasvatī* continued to appear among the deities in sacrificial ceremonies like the *Sautrāmaṇi*, the *Rājasūya*, the *Daśapeya*⁴, the *Darśapūrṇamāsa*⁵, etc.

Sarasvatī continues to appear with *Sarasvat* and offerings are made side by side to both of them, in the ceremonies contained in the *Śrauta Sūtras*.⁶

There is a discussion in the Śān. ŚS⁷ with regard to number and kinds of oblations in the sacrifice connected with consecration in the context of Soma sacrifices (when the high altar is built of bricks). According to one school of thought⁸ here, the fourth and fifth oblations are destined for *Aditi* and *Sarasvatī* apart from the usual three *iṣṭis*, one to *Agni* and *Viṣṇu*, one to *Agni-Vaiśvānara* and one to the *Ādityas*. From it, we get a cue that a school had a preference for the oblations to *Sarasvatī* over and above the usual tradition. It speaks of the popularity which *Sarasvatī* would have enjoyed amongst a certain section of the people.

The food prepared from rice seems to have become popular for the offerings to *Sarasvatī*. Grains of rice (*vṛhi*), fried grains of rice (*parivāpa*) and wetted and parched after wetting grains of rice (*lājā*) were prepared for *Sarasvatī*.⁹

Amongst the days sacred to *Sarasvatī*, we may count the full and new moon days when the *Anvārambhañīyā iṣṭi* is performed¹⁰; or when the *havis* are offered in the *Idā-dadha* ceremony.¹¹

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and the seventh day of the bright fortnight when the initiation (*dikṣa*) is done at Vinaśana.¹² Another text prescribes the sixth day (of bright fortnight in this case).¹³

The institution of *Yatra* of the river seems to be becoming popular in the Śrauta Sūtras because the *Sarvasva satras* similar to those in the Brahmanas are performed at different points on the river, mostly at Vinaśana, at the confluence of Sarasvatī and Dīśadvatī and at Plakṣa-Prasraṇa.¹¹

The banks of the river Sarasvatī are considered sacred for the performance of various ceremonies¹⁵ and its waters are used in the sacrificial ceremonies in the Śrauta-sūtras¹⁶ but in the Gṛhya Sūtras the river seems to be losing popularity which is gained by the Gaṅgā¹⁷. However, in the *Śnau-vidhī*, the Sarasvatī and the Gaṅgā in conjunction with Gaya, Naimiśa and Puṣkara are to be remembered being sacred *irīhas* before taking a bath.¹⁸

The Hiraṇyakeśi ŚS.¹⁹ appends the term Bhārati to Sarasvatī.²⁰ It shows that Sarasvatī and Bhārati would have been considered synonymous terms which in turn paved the way in later literature to take Bhārati as a regular name of Sarasvatī, learning incarnate or the goddess of learning.

In the Dharmasūtras, the goddess Sarasvatī is offered sacrificial water along with other deities, such as Keśava, Madbhava, Nārāyaṇa, Govinda, Viṣṇu, etc. and deified entities such as Tuṣṭi, Puṣṭi, Medhā, Kṣānti, Ruci, Śraddhā etc.²¹ In the Varāha-Dharmasūtra²², Sarasvatī is a synonym for knowledge and in the Viṣṇu-Dharmasūtra²³, Sarasvatī is an epithet of the goddess Śrī.

In the Gṛhyasūtras Sarasvatī is worshipped in a few ceremonies. The text of the *mantras* applied in the ceremonies is not important because mostly the Vedic *mantras* are repeated here; however, the context in which the *mantras* are applied is quite significant.

Sarasvatī being Vagdevī seems to be making its way to find a place in the rituals relating to education. In the *Upanayana*, the *Saṃskṛta* which stands at the head of all the rituals relating to education²⁴, the worship of the god Savitṛ is enjoined invariably.²⁵ But the text of Vai. GS.²⁶ shows that Sarasvatī, too, is to be worshipped after the adoration of Gaṇeśa and Savitṛ. When at the time of holding the right hand including the thumb

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of the student with his right hand, the teacher remembers a number of deities²⁷. An invocation to Sarasvatī, along with Indra and the Aśvins for bestowing sharp intellect is whispered near the face of the student by the teacher²⁸. The above prayer is repeated again when the student after investiture) undergoes a *vratā* for three days²⁹. *Mekhala* (a girdle) was a part of the uniform of a Brahmacārī.³⁰ At the time of tying it on the waist, it is addressed as 'the divine (devī) protectress (*goptrī*) Sarasvatī, who is the knower of undivided inheritance (*avibhāgaññe*) and is asked to bless the student with sharp intellect.

At the time of the *vidyārambha* (the starting of teaching), which forms an integral part of the *Upanayana* ceremony, the goddess Sarasvatī and the god Sarasvat are to be worshipped³¹. A *Sarvasva-homa* is prescribed as an expiation if one breaks the vow of celibacy during the *Upanayana*.³²

In the marriage ceremony at the time when the foot of the groom is placed on a stone-slab³³ and again in the context of *Saptā-paṭi*³⁴, *mantras* in adoration of the goddess Sarasvatī are read because the bride is equated here with the goddess Sarasvatī. The Sūtras prescribe that a groom should sing a praise of women on this occasion. The text of one of the *mantras* here is given as it represents an ideal of highest order, viz., the reverence which was paid by the people of the past in India to their womenfolk :

Sarasvatī predam ava subhage vāṇvatī!
Yām eva viśvasya bhūtiāsyā pragāyām asy-agrahaññi!
Tam-adya gāhāññi gāyanti yā stutā-m-utāmanyaññah!

-Agni GS. I, 5, 3.
 (O Sarasvatī, of good luck, rich in food and vigour, whom I celebrate in the face of this universe, protect this solemn rite, O thou in whom the elements were produced, in whom this universe was framed, I will sing that hymn (the nuptial text) which constitutes the highest glory of women).
 Hiraṇyakeśi GS.³⁵ prescribes that before cohabiting on the fourth night (the previous three nights being a period of monthly courses), the husband calls (the wife) who has taken a bath, and is wearing tidy dress and then mutters the three *mantras*³⁶. In one of these *mantras* Sarasvatī is prayed to bestow conception (on the wife of the worshipper). The possession of male children

was a cherished desire for which the Aryans being a marshal race³⁸ had been pining since the very beginning of their career of seeking their fortune in new lands. It is evident from a number of R̥gvedic prayers. The Vai. GS enjoins a prayer³⁹. 'Sarasvatī, promote this (our undertaking) etc.', in honour of Sarasvatī for obtaining male children.

The only significant reference with regard to the relations of Sarasvatī with other gods is that she has come near to Viṣṇu in the *Sūtras*. In the Baudhāyana DS., we have already seen that she is offered sacrificial water with Viṣṇu in his various forms such as Keśava, Mādhava, Govinda, etc.⁴⁰ In the Gṛhya-sūtras also, the *tarpaṇa* is made to her along with the other female members of the council of the Vaiṣṇava deities (*Viṣṇu-pāraṣadī-s*), to wit, Śrī-devī and Puṣṭi.⁴¹

In the context of lighting the sacrificial fire, may it be in the *Brahma*⁴²-yajña, the *Gṛhya*⁴³-karmas, the *Upanayana*⁴⁴, *Vivāha*⁴⁵ or *Aṣṭaka-śrādhā*⁴⁶, the permission of the goddess Sarasvatī preceded invariably by Aditi and Anumati is sought⁴⁷ and a 'jalāñjali' is offered on the north side of the fire to Sarasvatī, which is to the south in the case of Aditi and to the west in the case of Anumati. The only probable reason, for assigning north as the quarter to Sarasvatī, seems that the abode of the goddess was thought to be in the north. At *Vinaśana*⁴⁸ also we have seen that the oblations were offered by the worshipper while standing on its south bank, i. e., facing towards the north. In addition to it, Knowledge-Vāgdevī/Sarasvatī seems to have been thought as stationed in the north and a student desirous of attaining knowledge had to go to the north to obtain his desideratum.⁴⁹ It alludes to the fact that north had been the nucleus of knowledge and learning. The post-Vedic conception of taking Sarasvatī as stationed in Kāśmīra (Cf. her epithet *Kāśmīra-pura-vāsini*-SRUp.) also refers to the same fact.

The daily worship of Sarasvatī is enjoined as a part of the evening prayers (*sandhyopāsanam*). The goddess Sarasvatī is mentioned here along with Gāyatrī and Sāvitrī who are worshipped in the morning and at noon, respectively. Sarasvatī forms a triad with these two goddesses in the Purāṇas also but it (triad) became very popular with the authors of a few later minor Upaniṣads. Gāyatrī is the first member of the triad, Sāvitrī,

1. 6, 9, 17 (=MS. 1, 3, 1; Taitt. S. 3, 1, 10, 1; Kau. Br. 10, 6 etc.)
 2. Śāṇ. ŚS. 2, 4, 2. 3. 1, 3, 10; 7, 95, 5; 96, 6. 4. See e. g., Śāṇ. ŚS. 15, 5; 15, 14 etc. 5. Kātya. ŚS. 3, 7, 15—Sarasvatī is offered an oblation. Āp. ŚS. 5, 3, 5.
 6. Āp. ŚS. 5, 23, 5; Ā. ŚS. 2, 8, 3; Vā. ŚS. 1, 4, 4, 43; 3, 3, 1, 4; Mā. ŚS. 1, 15, 6, 19; Bṛā. ŚS. 5, 15, 10 etc.
 7. 9, 24, 1-5. 8. Ś.Br. 6, 6, 1, 2. 9. Vai. ŚS. 11, 1, 7; Hi. ŚS. 8, 1, 50.
 10. Śāṇ. ŚS. 2, 4, 1. 11. Ibid., 3, 9, 2; 3, 5; 6. 12. Kā. ŚS. 24, 5, 30.
 13. Lāt. ŚS. 10, 15, 1. 14. Śāṇ. ŚS. 13, 29, 15; Lāt. ŚS. 10, 15, 1; 10, 71, 1. 15. See e. g., Hi. ŚS. 17, 8, 8; Lāt. ŚS. 10, 15, 1; 10, 71, 1. 16. Hi. ŚS. 13, 15, 11; 16, 6, 41; Āp. ŚS. 18, 13, 1. 17. Vai. GS. 1, 5, 18. AVP. 42, 2, 4—
- Sarasvatīm Gnyām Gaṅgām Naimiṣam Puṣkarāṇi ca /
Smṛtvā tirthāni Pūnyānt avagāhej jalām tataḥ //*
19. 8, 1, 50. 20. Cf. Ait. Br. 2, 24. 21. Baudha. DS. 2, 9, 19; Śāṇ. DS. 116, 30. 22. 19, 23, 99, 4. 24. The *Upanayana* signifies 'the admission of a person to Vedic studies'. The connotation of the work *Upanaya* is that an *ācārya* (teacher) accepts a boy as his pupil—Dr. Ram Gopal : India of the Vedic Kalpa-sūtras, p. 291.
 25. Cf. Hir. GS. 15, 2; 'Brahmacārt bhavāni devena Savitrā prasūtaḥ'. Āp. DS. 1, 1, 1, 9-10 : The *Sāvitrī* (i. e. the famous *Gāyatrī*-a prayer to Savitrī in *Gāyatrī* metre) is learnt for (the study of) all the Vedas. 26. 2, 6.
 27. Agni GS. 1, 1, 3: *Sarasvatī te hastam agraḥit*. These words are repeated after prefixing the name of each deity one by one. 28. Ibid.
 29. Ibid., 1, 1, 4. 30. For details see Ram Gopal, op. cit., p. 294.
 31. Vā. GS. 7, 6; 7. 32. Agni. GS. 2, 7, 4. 33. Vā. GS. 14, 29.
 34. Ibid., 15, 19. 35. 1, 25, 1. 36. RV 10, 184, 1-3. 37. These *mantras*, according to Ātreya, ought to be repeated whenever they cohabit, Hi. GS. 1, 25, 3. But Bādarāyaṇa says that they are muttered only the first time and after her monthly courses...ibid., 4.
 38. The reason of this concept has changed with the changing times. Now the male children are desired because they are assets to the parents in contrast to the female ones who are a liability.
 39. 3, 3; the Sūtra text prescribes that the *mantras* of the prayer are to be read when husband faces the west, and wife the east or when he faces the east, she the west. 40. See supra p. 122. 41. Agni. GS. 2, 6, 3. 42. Āp. ŚS. 19, 20, 6; Go GS. 1, 3, 1; Āp. GS. 1, 2, 3 etc.
 43. Drā. GS. 1, 2, 18. 44. Agni. GS. 1, 1, 1; 1, 1, 3. 45. Ibid., 1, 1, 4; 1, 5, 1; 1, 6, 1. 46. Ibid., 3, 2, 1. 47. This stock prayer is first seen in the Tait. S. 2, 3, 1, 2; Mait. S. 2, 2, 1; 15, 6. 48. Lāt. ŚS. 10, 15, 1. 49. Kau. Br. 7, 6 : 'Udañca u eva yanti vācam śikṣitum.....' 50. Agni GS. 2, 6, 8 (=Taitt. Br., 5, 8, 6)

Etymological Study of the word 'Sarasvatī'

Sarasvatī is derived from root *sr̥*, 'to go' on the basis of Pāṇinian grammar¹. √*sr̥* can be traced back to √*svr̥*, giving a complex of meanings in the Vedic literature. In the course of our study, we have come across the word *Sarasvatī* conveying two fundamental meanings : (i) a river, which is also conceived as goddess; (ii) speech, and also the goddess of speech, a goddess dispensing speech /learning, etc.

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In the YV 8, 43 *Sarasvatī* also means 'a cow'. When *Sarasvatī* means a river, *saras* may be derived from *√sr*, 'to go'. Ācārya Viśva Bandhu's suggestion that *√sr* is probably a developed form of the root **kṣar*, 'praksarane', **dravibhave* does not seem to be convincing for the reason that the water of the river which flows (or goes on) cannot be said as 'melting', assuming a liquid form. To take *√sr*, 'to go' in *Sarasvatī* is as natural as to take *√gam*, 'to go' in 'Gaṅgā', the name of another river. Though *√sr* (Nigh. *sisarī* 2, 14) expressing the notion of 'motion' is quite conspicuous by its presence in the RV in words like *samsṛāva*, 'world', *sarī*, 'river', *salila*, 'water', *Saranyu*, name of a river, *Sarayu*, 'name of a river and *Saramā*, 'the messenger of the *devas*', yet, if at all it is to be traced back, it should be traced to *√sr*, 'to go' (Nigh. 2, 14).

We further suggest that when *Sarasvatī* means 'speech', it should not be derived from *√sr*, 'to go', etc. but, in fact, the notion of 'sound' and 'utterance' is the main function of speech. Hence the word '*saras* meaning *vāk*, 'sound' should be derived from *√sr*, *śabd*, 'to utter', 'to sound'. In many passages of the RV root *sr*, 'to utter', has been used. The root '*sr*' also means 'to praise' in the RV. *Saras* being derived from *√sr* < *√sr* will thus mean 'utterance', 'sound', or 'praise'. '*Sarasvatī*' would, therefore, mean 'possessed of, i. e., containing utterance or sound', i. e., 'speech', '*vāk*', '*vān*'. When it will be the name of the goddess, it would mean 'one possessed of praise', i. e., 'to whom eulogy is addressed'.

It is further suggested that when '*Sarasvatī*' would mean 'a cow', it may be derived from *√sr* < *√sr*, 'to shine', '*Saras* will thus mean 'lustre' and '*Sarasvatī*', 'the one possessed of lustre'. It is in fact the meaning which is to be understood in the YV passage quoted above (i. e., 8, 43).

While etymologizing the word *Sarasvatī*, *saras* has been taken as giving the meaning of *sarānam* by ancient scholars³ and modern writers⁴. It is absolutely wrong. *Saras*, from *√sr* plus *asun* > *us* (the suffix) is nominative or active in nature (*kārtari* as *pratyaye*....., Bhānujī Dikṣita). *Saras*, therefore, like many other words of its class⁵ does not contain the sense of the word *sarānam* constructed with the suffix *lyu* (*bhavyave*) added to the same root *sr*. Thus *Sayana* is wrong when he equates *saras* with *sarānam* in his words *Sarasvatī Sarāṇavatī* etc. *Saras* is in reality *saravastī*, having the nature of *sarāna* and is not *sarāna*. Similarly Mahidhara is also wrong when he says *sarāḥ śudda-pravāhaḥ* because in fact *saras* is *śudda*, sound, and not *the flowing of sound*. Summarizing we shall say :

(i) *Sarasvatī*, meaning 'river', is to be derived from root *sr* < *√sr*, 'to utter', 'to sound'. Its fundamental meanings would be then 'one possessed of sound or utterance'.

(ii) *Sarasvatī* meaning 'speech' is to be derived from root

sr < *√sr*, 'to utter', 'to sound'. Its fundamental meanings would be then 'one possessed of sound or utterance'.

(iii) *Sarasvatī* meaning 'a goddess' is to be derived from root *sr* < root *sr*, 'to praise'. Its fundamental meaning would be then 'one possessed of praise' i. e., 'who has been praised'.

(iv) *Sarasvatī* meaning 'a cow' is to be derived from root *sr* < root *sr*, 'to shine'. Its fundamental meaning would be then 'one possessed of lustre'.

(It is only once that we come across a reference in which this word is spelt as *Sarasvatī* in *Saravastī-kṛtyas* etc.... YV 20, 35. Accounting for the short vowel 'i' instead of long vowel 'ī' Mahidhara quotes Paṇini 6, 3, 63 : *hyāpōḥ somhācchandaśor bahulam* i. e., it is a Vedic peculiarity that *i* i. e., *īp* is sometimes changed into *i*).

Dr. Surya Kantā has suggested in his paper 'Saras, Soma and Sira'⁶ that *Saras* in *Sarasvatī* is Soma and not water. He further identifies *Sarasvatī* with *Aśvinmatī* banking upon the information contained in the Soma legend (RV 8, 96, 13-15) and the Bṛhaddevatā (6, 109-114). *Aśvin* is unmistakably Soma in the RV, *saras* is, therefore, Soma and is to be derived from the root *sr* expressing the notion of motion. Thus *Sarasvatī* according to the savant means 'rich in soma' and not 'rich in waters'. Dr. Surya Kantā has given no reference in his paper in which *saras* and *soma* tend to be identical to each other. In a few passages of the RV *saras* means the vessel containing Soma⁷. Judging it on the principles of semantics, we may say that *saras* would have also meant *soma* at one time and its meaning was extended afterwards to the vessel containing *soma*.⁸ Explaining RV 7, 103, 7, Venkaiamādhava writes : *Sarāḥ śuddaḥ soma vacanāḥ*. In order to confirm the view-point of Dr. Surya Kantā, it may also be added that lexicons give *soma-lata* as one of the meanings of the word *Sarasvatī*⁹ which also suggests that *saras* and *soma* must have been identical terms. But it is submitted here that the meaning of *saras* as *soma* where *Sarasvatī* stands for speech may be quite tenable because Soma is an impeller of speech etc.¹⁰ but when it means 'the river' *saras* should preferably mean 'water'.¹¹ In Sadānira, one component of the word does mean 'water'. It is, therefore, not incorrect to take *saras* to mean 'water' in the word *Sarasvatī* the river.

Sarasvatī has been translated by Keith and Macdonell¹² as 'one abounding in pools' i. e., *sarāṇī sanī-āyām*. But it is incorrect to say that since *Sarasvatī* particularly forms pools while flowing, therefore it is called *Sarasvatī*. Though the word *saras* meaning pond does occur in the RV¹³, its meaning of *saras* is not intended in the word *Sarasvatī*. It is because the formation of pools and lakes is a general characteristic of a river when it flows in the second stage, i. e., in the plains having traversed the hilly paths. Such ponds are in reality the 'ox-bow-lakes' which are formed by perennial rivers in their attempt

to straighten (i. e., change) their path (which is peculiarly zig-zag in the plains) by way of erosion¹⁸. Sarasvatī, too, may have formed such pools in antiquity. But such pools or lakes as are mentioned in the account of *Pratiloma Yātra* (sojourn from the mouth to source) of Sarasvatī seem to have been formed when the Sarasvatī lost its perennial character and flowed only for a few months in the rainy season¹⁹. That is, such a characteristic of forming pools is very late in the history of the course of this pre-historic river, therefore, we cannot justify that *saars-vaṛi* 'abounding in pools' would have been the original sense of the name of the river. The word *Sarasvatī* should rather be explained as *sarāṃsi meghodakāni yasyāḥ*, one who contains the waters of the clouds'. This explanation of ours is in apposition to its Rgvedic epithets *sindhu-mātā*²⁰ and *sindhubhīḥ pinvāmānā*²¹.

1. Cf. Bhānuji Dikṣita, the commentator of Amarakoṣa who explains the word: *Sarati gaccati vahati yat tat sarah jalam kartari as pratyaye kṛte saras śabda jalārthe kospi drīyate; tadā tu Sarasvān ity-asya jala-vān ityarthāt jalavati nadi ity-arthospi saṃgacchate eva tadā tu yogārūḍham idam padam bodhyam*, i. e. root *sr+asun>as=saras* (from *sarvadhātubhyossun*, Uṇādi, 4, 189). *Saras+matup=Sarasvat*, *Sarasvat+ñip>i=Sarasvatī*. Scholiasts have also followed Pāṇini. See; e. g., Sāyaṇa's comm. on RV 3, 10; 188, 8; 2, 30, 8; 3, 23, 4; 54, 13; Av. 18, 1, 41 and Mahidhara's Comm. on YV 10, 5 etc.
2. A Vedic word Concordance, Saṃhitā Section, Part V, p. 3319, note 'n'.
3. Cf. *svaranty-āposvanā parijraya* h. RV, 5, 54, 2; Veṅkaṭamādhava: *svaranti pra-gamayanti*.
4. Sāyaṇa has erroneously done it: *gadya-padya-rūpeṇa prasaraṇam asyā astīti Sarasvatī*... comm. RV, 3, 54, 13; again *Sarasvatīm Surasvatīm sakala-śabda-svarūpām Vāg-devatām*. Comm. on AV 18, 1, 41. M. hīdhara also says: '*Sarah śabda-pravāho yasyāḥ sā Sarasvatī*'... comm. on YV, 10, 5. Miss Ragozin (Vedic India, p. 269) says the quality of 'flowing' of speech is also witnessed in the English idiom, where we have 'a rich, a free, an easy-flow of words', 'fluency of speech', 'a torrent of eloquence'. But we understand that these English idioms have nothing to do with the etymology of the word because they are more symbolic rather than expressive of the original and inherent quality of speech.
5. See, e. g., 1, 151, 5; 5, 54, 12. 6. See e. g., RV 8, 3, 16. 7. See e. g. Sāyaṇa's comm. on RV 2, 30, 8; AV 7, 70, 1; 71, 1 and Durga's comm. on Nighaṇṭu 1, 11. 8. Anand Swarup Gupta: 'The word 'saras' (*sarah*, actually means 'saraṇam' or 'prasaraṇam' (moving, gliding, flowing etc.)'-Purāṇa, Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 62. 9. *Cetas, piyas, sadas, etc.*
10. ABORI Vol. XXXVIII, Part I-II, pp. 115-39. Poona, 1958 (Reprint).
11. 6, 27, 11; 7, 103, 7; 8, 7, 10; 9, 54, 2. 12. Cf. Latin 'potare'-a drink and Icelandic 'pottr' (skt. *pātra* root *pā*) the pot containing a drink; Students English Dictionary, Charles Annandale, Blackie and Son, p. 547. Similarly, it is very probable that *Saras* would have meant 'pond', 'lake' because it contained *Saras* 'water' the one that flows. *Saras*, meaning 'pool' cannot be directly derived from root *sr*, 'to go', 'to move on', 'flow' because pool is some what a stationary object and the water contained in it is also stagnant and not flowing.
13. See, e. g., the Vācaspatyam, p. 5249 which quotes 'the Śbdi-candrikā'
14. VM, p. 109. 15. It is in contrast to the words of Dr. Suryakanta, op cit. p. 115-But as water is the common constituent of all the rivers it may be pointless to connect this name (*Sarasvatī*) with water.
16. Ved. Ind. Vol II, p. 12. 17. See note 11 above. 18. See Thornbury, op. cit., pp. 137-38; Chapter V, The Fluvial Geomorphologic Cycle.
19. Baladeva undertook such a *yātra*, Mōh. Śūlya Purva; 33-54. 20. See supra p. 49. 21. See supra p. 46.

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